Isagoge ad Dei Providentiam:

OR, A

PROSPECT OF DIVINE Providence.

By *T. C.* M. A.

Come and see the works of God —— Psal. 66. 5.
That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it, Isa. 41. 20.
And I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see, Rev. 6. 1.

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To the *READER.*

BEFORE (thou) enter into the Parlour, give me leave to ſalute thee with a few words in this Porch. There are two Books which deſervedly call for the ſerious peruſal, both of Miniſters and People; Teachers, and thoſe who are taught: Thoſe Books are, the Two Volumes of the Sacred Scriptures, and Divine Providence: And theſe are Comments on, or Expoſitions of each other. I grant the former to be determinative, and yet the later I adjudg to be inductive to, and ſo harmoniouſly illuſtrative of the former. The Moon hath its light for the uſe of man, though the light thereof be borrowed from the Sun in part, as ſay the Learned. *Divine Providence* is a Torch ſet up in the World, and is lighted at the ſame fire, *viz.* The Will of God, with the Scriptures: A difference

there is, and yet not such, but that both *Scripture* and *Providence* do concenter in the glory of God, the use of man, and the mutual elucidation of each other.

I have in the following Treatise laboured to present thee with a Draught or Picture of *Divine Providence*; and have cast my weak eye on the Sacred Scriptures in drawing this Picture. I look on the holy Scriptures, as the living and lively Face, and whoso neglects them, will do the work by halves, as it is vulgarly phrased. More particularly; in the prosecution of this Subject, I have (or at least-wise would have) consulted three things.

1. A pertinent Variety, for the Matter; and this as founded on the Scriptures, and amplified from some intermix't Histories, some whereof are found on record in Authors; others are rehearsed by me: and though I have not so particularly set them down for Time, Place, and Persons; yet they are no Fictions, but Realities, commended to me from those who would not tell a lye for *Providence*. Far be it from me to affect lying-Legends; and as far be it from me (because of lying-Legends

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in the World) to bury the Works of God in the grave of a contemptuous Oblivion! Extreams in matters, are of dangerous consequence. An holy Prudence teacheth to beware, lest whilst we essay to run from sin, we do not run into sin. And thus for the first thing here consulted.

2. A Clearness for Method. That Method pleaseth me, which may be most useful for the common Reader, whose good is intended in the Subject to be treated of. I like not that humour of some, who will not travel the easiest and plainest Road, because of the company of such who indeed are honest and plain men, and will commit no robbery, unless it be on the lusts of men, by a facil access to their souls in the way of Teaching; and let such honest Robbers be forgiven this wrong. Here, if I mistake not, I have kept pace with that Method which not only the common *Reader*'s capacity may admit of; but the Subject here handled doth in a sort resolve it self into. It matters not by what appellation this Method is termed, so it be suitable to the nature of the subject, and the Reader's capacity. If any list to be contentious, I

say no more, but, That we have no such custom in our Countrey to cavil about the colour of a Cow which gives down her Milk with ease, and that too good for such who scorn it because of the mixt colour of the Beast. And thus for the Method here.

3. An ordinary Plainness for the Phrase or Language. I affect not high and long lines; but rather short Sayings and plain Similitudes. The one best suits with a weak memory, and the other with a low understanding. *Similitudes*, or popular Allusions, have a further advantage; for as they are borrowed from things in and about which *Providence* doth work, so they bring to remembrance the Works of *Providence*. The Water of Life may be called to mind at a *Jacob*'s Well. If the phrase then here used run not smoothly, remember I study Things, not Words. A Diamond, though not polish't, is not to be thrown by, as a peeble-stone.

If in the reading thou object, (1.) That some places of Scripture are more than once mentioned. (2.) That the same matter is in some places of this Treatise repeated. I must crave thy patience to hear, before thou condem. And to the

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firſt of theſe take the Reply as followeth.

1. The ſame places of Scripture may be quoted, and yet the ſame Scriptures not needleſly repeated. One and the ſame place of Scripture hath divers things wrapt up in it. There are more Jewels than one in the Caſket. If one be taken out at one time, another at another ſeaſon, thou muſt blame thine own eyes in looking meerly on the Caſket, and not on the diſtinct Jewel.

2. Though the ſame Scriptures may be repeated, yet thou may'ſt find them perhaps ſo repeated, as may wipe off the calumny of a vain repetition. It is well obſerved by one in reference to *Solomon's Proverbs*, *That though the ſame Proverb be here and there ſcatter'd, yet we have it with intereſt.*

To the ſecond Objection, conſider the following Reply. (1.) Diſtinguiſh between the material, and formal or preciſe conſideration of a thing. An old Truth may be found a new one; new, in regard of the Principle from which it is deducted; and old, for that the ſame, for the matter, was before intimated. The Doctrine of the Reſurrection is a Truth known from divers places

places of Scripture; but this, as rationally infer'd by our Saviour from *Exod.* 3. 6. may well be-ſpeak the funerals of fooliſh cavils, and the reſurrection of an holy admiration. But (2.) if this ſuffice not, remember, the Writer may be forgetful as well as others. I could mention worthy Authors, in whoſe Writings ſome things occur once and again. I attribute this not to their barrenneſs, but forgetfulneſs, and loathneſs to diſſever the Links of the Chain, being joined in a friendly neighbourhood. Have charity then in this caſe, if not for others, yet for thy ſelf: for it may be the ſame thing that may occur, is willing to confer a-freſh with thy ſoul, being not ſo fully underſtood, or practically improved by thee, as it ſhould be, *To write the ſame things to you, to me indeed is not grievous; but for you it is ſafe*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the *Philippians*, chap. 3. 1.

Having thus far been thy Guide, leſt thou may'ſt loſe thy way; it's time now to leave thee to thy journey. I hope thou wilt not meet with mire and dirt here. What is ſo, if any, I muſt own: what is not ſo, *Providence* will own. I muſt confeſs, the Subject may call for a

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Quill pluck't from the wing of a *Seraphim*; and though that be ſo, yet that is no apology to have Padlocks on our Tongues or Pens: for the Tongue ought to be the Pen of a ready writer; and the Pen the Tongue of a ready ſpeaker, to publiſh the *wonderful works of him who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee: to whom be honour and power everlaſting, Amen.* 1 Tim. 6. 15, 16.

READER.

PREFACE.

THE word [Providence] *hath its various imports or significations; sometimes it is taken in a bad sense, and so notes an unhappy fore-cast or contrivance in order to men's gratifying some lust or other:* so Rom. 13. 14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. *Sinners are provident for their darling-corruptions;* They are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledg, *Jer.* 4. 22.

2. *Other-while the word is taken in a good sense, and so it is applied or accommodated,* (1.) *To men.* (2.) *To God.*

1. *As it is applied to men; it notes or points at a Moral Virtue, a Political Endowment, and a Spiritual Grace. A prudent man in ordering his affairs, is all one with the* provident *man.* Paulus Sergius *is stil'd a* prudent man, *Acts* 13. 7. Tertullus *in his Oration doth politically use, if not through flattery abuse, the term* [Providence]. Very worthy deeds are done unto this Nation by thy Providence, *saith he to* Felix, Acts 24. 2. *The Apostle* Paul *doth call for the exercise of Pre-consideration, Prudence, or Providence, as a Theological Virtue or Grace to be made conscience of by Christi-*

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ans, Rom. 12.17. Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. *And in* 1 Tim. 5.8. But if any provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an Infidel. *And thus, as the word is applied to men.*

2. *The term is transferr'd to God*; *and ſo it is*,

1. *Decretal, Original, Ordinative, and is nothing elſe but the eternal Platform of things, the original Draught or Copy of them*, Iſa. 40. 12, 13, 14. Acts 2.23. Acts 4.28.

2. *Actual or Executive, which is the Counterpane or Copy of that Copy, and notes more than a meer inſpection or looking thorow the wood or buſhes of Second Cauſes and Contingent Events.* Abraham's *belief doth note more than a meer inſight, when he ſaith to* Iſaac, God will *provide* himſelf a Lamb for a burnt-offering, *Gen.* 22.8. *According therefore to this later acceptation of the word, I may thus deſcribe it, as the deſcription is founded on the Sacred Scriptures*, viz.

Providence is a work of God, whereby he ſuſtains, governs, orders, all the Creatures, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to his own glory.

It is a work.] *As there are the works of Creation, ſo there are the works of Providence. It is ſaid* Deut. 32.4. His work is perfect. *And Pſal.* 44.1. We have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what work thou didſt in their days, in the times of old. *So Pſal.* 77.12. I will meditate alſo of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. *And Iſa.* 28.21. That he may do his work, his ſtrange work, and bring to paſs his act, his

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strange act. My Father worketh, *saith Christ*, John 5. 17.

Of God] *So it is said, Psal.* 111. 3. His work is honourable and glorious. *No Person of the blessed Trinity is excluded:* My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, *asserteth our Saviour in the place fore-mentioned*, John 5. 17. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, *Gen.* 1, 2. *And thus in the Creation there was an agency of the Spirit*; *so in the works of Providence*, *Isa.* 48. 16. — and his Spirit hath sent me. *And Mat.* 4. 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit.

Whereby he sustains] *So* Psal. 50. 12. Uphold me with thy free Spirit. *And* Psal. 66. 9. Which holdeth our soul in life. *And* Heb. 1. 3. Upholding all things by the Word of his Power.

Governs and orders] *So* Job 25. 2. Dominion and fear are with him. *Psal.* 22. 28. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governour among the nations. *Isa.* 9. 7. Of the encrease of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to stablish it, with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this. *Jude* v. 25. To the only wise God our Saviour be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, from henceforth for ever.

All the Creatures] Unto me every knee shall bow. *Isa.* 45. 23. All the Creatures are his hosts who is the Lord of Saboath. *Jam.* 5. 4. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, Rom. 11. 36.

According to the good pleasure of his will]

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He hath done whatsoever he pleased, *Psa.*115.3 I, even I am the Lord, *Isa.*43.11. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure, *Isa.* 46.10. Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will, *Ephes.* 1.11.

To his own glory] *God's glory is nothing else but the irradiation or sparkling forth of his divine excellency. He consults the glory of his Attributes in his work of Providence.* His works honourable and glorious, *Psal.*111.3. *As then God acteth from himself, and from no other; so for himself, his own glory ultimately.* For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen, *Rom.*11.36.

Having thus pointed at the Scriptures on which, with the like others, as a firm basis or bottom, the Description standeth: I shall now with my Coal draw out the lineaments of the ensuing Discourse, which may be branch'd forth into Five Parts. *The First contains the* Scripture-Arguments *for the proof of what is here supposed, namely, That there is a* Providence. *The Second takes in the various* Considerations *or* Distinctions *of* Providence. *The Third treateth of the* Object *or* Extent *of* Providence, *in regard of the several things it is conversant about. The Fourth presents, with* Miscellaneous Aphorisms *or* Observations *on the* Providence *of God. The Last comprehends* Directions *for the better improvement of God's Providential Dispensations. These are the Five general Parts; and of these in their order, according to that Providential phrase, Heb.*6.3. And this will we do, if God permit.

A PROSPECT OF Divine Providenee.

PART I.

THAT there is a *Providence*, (1.) appears from thoſe Sacred Hieroglyphicks, Pictures, or Repreſentations thereof in Sacred Scripture. He that ſhall climb *Jacob*'s Ladder in his Meditations, may behold the God of *Providence* at the top thereof; *Behold, the Lord ſtood above it*, Gen. 28. 13. He that was above, had an eye on what was beneath. *I ſaw the Lord* (ſaith *Micaiah*) *ſitting on his throne*, &c. 1 *King.* 22. 19, *&c.* God's *Providence* is there Viſioned-forth, or ſet out to

Micaiah. In the firſt Chapter of *Job*, there is a Providential ſcheme or draught of what was to take place in *Job*'s caſe there. *Ezekiel*'s Viſion of the Wheels, is a confutation of the *Wheel of Fortune*. They who know God, have the *Wheel of Providence* to meditate and diſcourſe of.

2. From poſitive Aſſertions in Scripture: *The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the ſons of men: from the place of his habitation, he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth: he faſhioneth their hearts alike; he conſidereth all their works*, Pſal. 33. 13, 14, 15. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*, Prov. 15. 3. *Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not better than they?* Mat. 26. See alſo Mat. 10. 29.

3. From Divine Aſſumptions and Appropriations of the work of Providence to God himſelf. When the Lord anſwered *Job* out of the Whirl-wind, how doth he challenge to himſelf a ſupream Agency in and over the Creatures? *Who* (ſaith he) *provideth for the Raven his food?* Job 38. 41. And in *Iſa.* 45. 7. *I form the light, and create darkneſs: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all theſe things.*

4. From Expoſtulations, Checks, Comminations, bottomed on the conſideration of *Divine Providence*. So *Pſal.* 50. *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thy ſelf: but I will*

will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes. Now conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, v. 21, 22. And ſo likewiſe in *Pſal.* 94. *Underſtand, O ye brutiſh amongſt the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that chaſtiſeth the heathen, ſhall he not correct? He that teacheth man knowledg, ſhall he not know?* v. 8, 9, 10.

5. From the Religious forms of ſpeech: by which are implied the verity of *God's Providence*, extending to affairs in the world. *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Iſrael, As yet they ſhall uſe this ſpeech in the land of Judah, and in the Cities thereof, when I ſhall bring again their captivity, The Lord bleſs thee, O habitation of Juſtice, and Mountain of Holineſs*, Jer. 31. 23. *For that ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this or that*, James 4. 15. *I truſt* (ſaith *Paul*) *to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit*, 1 Cor. 15. 7.

6. From Prayers made to God. The Scripture hath no Altar for an unknown God. We are not taught to pray to Fortune, to our own Wills, Saints or Angels: None of theſe are the *Father which is in Heaven*, whoſe *is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory*. The Orthodox Prayers of Saints, are demonſtrations that they were not Heterodox in the point of *Providence*; they acknowledged a *Providence* on earth, who were ever and anon looking up in prayer to the God of Heaven. See *Ezra* 8. 21, 22, 31. *Neh.* 2. 4, with 18. *Rom.* 1. 10.

And thus I have shewed how there is a *Providence*; This was an old Article of the Saints Creed. I shall for further clearing up the point, 1. Lay down other Arguments. 2. Reply to some Objections. 3. Draw some Consectaries or Inferences. Of these in their order.

CHAP. I.

1. FRom God himself: And so observe, 1. That the appellations or titles given to Him, are implications of the thing. He is *Jehovah*, who gives the Creatures their beeing and operation, *Acts* 17. 28. He is *the Judg of all the earth*, Gen. 18. 25. He is *the King of all the earth*, Psal. 47. 7. He is the First Cause; *I will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth*, &c. Hos. 2. 11. * To deny then his Providence, is to take up the Bucklers against these no less glorious, than true Appellations of his. But, 2. His glorious Attributes of Power, Goodness, Wisdom, Justice, are as so many demonstrations of his *Providence*: for all these, the World existing, are not dormant: These Attributes are richly interwoven in the works of *Providence*. The Scripture saith unto *Pharoah*,

Non sanè multum interesse, utrum quis Deos esse neget, an eos omni procuratione atque actione privet; mihi enim, qui nihil agit, esse omninò non videtur. *Cicer. lib. 2. de nat. Deor.*

roah, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the earth. Rom. 8. 17. *Thou art good, and dost good.* Psal. 119. 68. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.* Psal 104. 24. *But God is the Judg; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* Psal. 75. 7. Lastly, The Lord's creation of the World doth, according to the Logick of the Scripture, infer his *Providence*: For, 1. He is called, *the faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. The Lord leaves not the stately House of the World, after he hath erected it. 2. Considerations or Motives for supportation and consolation, are couch'd in God's creation of the World: so that they who have an interest in God, may hope for a display of his Attributes in his government of the World: so in *Isa.* 40. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, That the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is he weary?* &c. *v.* 28, 29. 3. There is an indissoluble or firm knot knit betwixt the Lord's creating and governing the World: for, what is *Providence* but a kind of continued Creation? and therefore that word is used to set forth *Providence* by in Scripture; see *Psal.* 51. 10. and 104. 30. *Isa.* 43. 7. Again, to acknowledg God the Creator, and some other the Governour, is, to rob the Lord of his glory; against which robbery he vehemently protesteth, as in *Isa.* 42. 8. Lastly, observe, in *Isa.* 45. the same God there, who

made the Earth, and created Man upon it, in *v.* 12; raised up *Cyrus*, and prospered him, in *v.* 13. There is no reason then to break the band of amity or alliance betwixt Creation and Providence, which the Lord so conjunctively owneth and appropriateth to himself, see *Jer.* 27. 5, 6.

2. From Providence it self. There is an intrinsecal or inbred light in Providence, by which it is seen. *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee; Who knoweth not in all these, the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?* Job 12. 7, 8, 9.

There are four things observable; the first whereof is general; the other three more special: but all of them corroborate or confirm the testimony of Providence. That which is general, is the admirable and wise disposition of things. The Creatures know their ranks and files; so in *Psal.* 74. *The day is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun: thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter*, v. 16, 17. Note here, how the words do not only declare an exact and constituted order in naturals; but do likewise imply a rich display of Wisdom, in the vicissitudes and successions of distresses and deliverances, which are wisely timed by the Providence of God for his

Simul etiamà facili argumentatur: Cum talia præstes quotidie, quanto facilius potes nos liberare? *Mollerus in loc.*

his people. And to this purpoſe tends the ſcope of the *Pſalmiſt* here.

The things *ſpecial* in the Providence of God, are, 1. The tranſcendency or extraordinary viſibility of it in ſome matters. Providence oftentimes mounts aloft above the reaſon of ſecond Cauſes. Thus the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jeſus, when they ſaw the Earthquake, and what was done, *they feared greatly, ſaying, Truly this was the Son of God*, Mat. 27. 54. 2. The wonderful adæquateneſs and proportion of a diſpenſation. An inſtance for this is that in *Judg.* 1. 6, 7. *As I have done* (ſaith *Adonibezek* there) *ſo God hath requited me.* 3. The correſpondency or accord of a diſpenſation with Divine Predictions and Comminations. So the raiſing up of *Cyrus*, *Ezek.* 1. 1, 2, 3, 4. compared with *Iſa.* 44. 28. and 45. 13. And ſo likewiſe the *Jews* under their calamities might behold the convincing-hand of Providence; when their language is, *Like as the Lord of Hoſts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings; ſo hath he dealt with us*, Zech. 1. 6. And not only the cruſhing-diſpenſations by the *Babylonian*, conſidered in conjunction with the threatnings of the Prophets, carry the more of a convincing-light in them; but likewiſe thoſe by the *Romans*, fore-told by *Daniel*, and more nearly intimated by our Saviour, *Mat.* 24. 15, 16. *Luke* 23. 28, 29, 30. I ſhall here annex what *Joſephus* a Jew hath as pertinent to the matter in hand, and ſo paſs to the next Argument. Antiq. lib 10. c. 11.

"At the same time *Daniel* wrote as touching the Empire of the *Romans*, how it "should destroy our Nation; and hath left "all these things in writing, according as "God declared unto him; so that they who "read and consider those things that have "happened, admire *Daniel* for the honour "God hath dignified him with; and find "thereby that *Epicures* err, who drive all "Providence from human life, and affirm, "That God governeth not the affairs of the "World; or, that the World is administred "by an happy and incorruptible essence, "which causeth all things to continue in their "beeing: but say, that the World is managed "by it self, by Casualty, without any Con"ductor, or such an one as hath care thereof: "for if it were so, and that it were destitute "of a Soveraign Governour (as we see Ships "destitute of their Pilots, to be drowned by "the Winds; and Chariots, that have no "Drivers to conduct them, to beat one against "another; even so should it ruinate it self). "By these things therefore that *Daniel* hath "foretold, I judg, that they are far estranged from the truth, that affirm, That God "hath no care of human affairs: for if we "see that all things happen casually, then "happen they not according to this Pro"phecy.

3. From the Absurdities on the contrary.

1. The World, in regard of the comely œconomy or administration of it, which takes place, would not be a World, whilst it is a World:

World: for if there are evil Angels, and these so malicious and mischievous as the word of God affirmeth; these would marr the beauty of all, and turn all into heaps of confusion, were there not a curbing-Providence, as is fully declared from *Job*, chap. 1 and 2. and *Mat.* 8. 31,32. In both which places men may behold *Beelzebub* with his Companions in the Chains of Providence.

2. The Checks of conscience, and fears on the spirits of men, would be but a false fire, and groundless fancy, if there were not a Providence; and this is contrary to that of the Apostle in *Rom.* 2. 15. where he speaks of an accusing and terrifying Conscience in the Heathens, who stood in some awe of a Deity, or a Providence controlling them and punishing them for their mis-deeds. The barbarous people of *Melita* had an observation of Vengeance pursuing Murder, as may be collected from *Acts* 28. 24.

3. A gap to Atheism, Brutality, and all manner of prophaneſs, would be opened by a denial of God's Providence: If this deep be broken up, no wonder if a deluge or flood of ungodliness follow. What the Apostle doth infer from the denial of the resurrection, will

Si providentia Dei non præsideat rebus humanis, nihil est amplius de religione fatagendum. *August.* Si autem homo eò devenit, ut secum cogitet nullam esse providentiam, & Deum nostra nihil curare, patefecit jam sibi januam ad omnem nequitiam, audet quidvis tam dicere, tam facere, nec ullum repriprimit affectum, quære & diabolus ejus rei non ignarus, contendit omnibus viribus hominem eo inducere, ut divinam providentiam neget. *Lavat. in Job* c. 22.

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be the first use of such a wicked doctrine, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we dye:* but surely Humanity, much more Christianity, dictates otherwise.

CHAP. II.

THough the Doctrine of *Providence* be written with a Sun-beam, yet there are some mists and fogs, by reason whereof, some are at a puzzle, and ready to question the truth of God's Providence.

The great and common Objection is, The seeming confusion in the World by reason of the fury and tyranny of some wicked ones, who prosper in their attempts on others, better than themselves; and not only Heathens of the wild Common of the World, but others of the enclosed Garden of the Lord, have hereupon been staggered; as *Psal.* 73. *v.* 2, 3.

I shall not here fall in with a large discourse by way of reply to this Objection: In short then, let it be considered,

1. Whatever there is of proper ataxie, disorder, or confusion, is not to be charged on the Lord, who *is not the author of confusion*, 1 Cor. 14 33.

2. There is a wise and righteous method of God in all the diforders and confusions of men,

men. *Providence* is in the head of the Creatures, obſerving a goodly order, when the Creatures to our apprehenſion keep neither rank nor file. A ſerious ſearch then being made into the diſorders and barbarous inſolencies of men, it will be ſo far from diſmantling the Throne of *Providence*, as that it will clear up the eye of faith, to behold the Lord ſitting there, and ſceptring it over the proudeſt and moſt outragious Monarchs of the World. *I ſaw the Lord ſitting upon a throne*, ſaith the Prophet, *Iſa.* 6. 1. and yet in the ſame Chapter we read how Cities were to be waſted, without an Inhabitant, and the houſes without men, and the Land to be utterly deſolate, *v.* 11. The ſame Prophet hath a Divine Treatiſe on this ſubject, in the tenth Chapter, where indeed the Prophet plays the Caſuiſt, and giveth ſatisfaction to the doubt, *Iſa.* ch. 10.

There are ſome other Objections, which the weakneſs or perverſneſs of man doth ſtart from places of Scripture: I ſhall name them, and ſo reply.

Firſt, From that paſſage of *David*, 1 Sam. 24. 14. *Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord; and let me not fall into the hand of man.*

Anſ. 1. The meaning of *David* is not to deny the *Providence* of God as reaching to the Swords and Spears of an Enemy; he had not ſo learned *Providence*: for he who was a man of

of warr, was also a pious Soldier, and observed God's Providence in the field. See *Psal.* 18. 31,32,33,34. *Psal.* 78. 62.

2. The sense then must be otherwise; and that either, 1. By way of a comparative opposition between the righteous and eminent hand of God in the Pestilence, (as 2 *Sam.* 24. 16.) and the wicked hands of men, who will, with their victories, insult over Religion, and blaspheme God with their tongues, which upon this account cut deeper on the tender Consciences of Saints, than Swords and Battle-axes do on their flesh. See *Psal.* 74. 18. and 137. 3,4,5,6. *Isa.* 37. 1,14,15, with 23,24. According then to this interpretation, *David* may be understood: and if not so, though not excluded; then, 2. By way of popular allusion: *David* speaks after the manner of men, as *Benhadad*, 2 *Kings* 20. 31. or as a Child, who having incurr'd his Father's displeasure, is desirous to be corrected by his Father, and not to be turn'd over to some base Slave for correction: and the rather he desires this, because he hath to do with a Father. After this sort, *David*'s phrase of speech may be understood; and that, 1. Because he renders this as a reason for his choice, *For very great are his mercies*, 1 Chron. 21, 13. 2. Because in other places of Scripture God is set forth as a Father, whose bowels turn whilst the rod is in his hand, *Psal.* 103. 13. with *Hos.* 11. 8.

Another place of Scripture is *Zech.* 1. 15: *For I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.* *Ans.*

Anſ. Nothing elſe can rationally be inferred hence, but an aggravation of the fury and cruelty of the Church's Enemies; they intended, hoped, and endeavoured, an utter extirpation of the Church, when God intended a purgation. This (ſaith a modern Divine) made God as angry with thoſe he ſet a-work, as them againſt whom they were employed: So hateful is cruelty and ambition to him, and ſo different is his mind and man's in inflicting the ſame puniſhment. Compare with this, *Iſa.* 47. 6. and 10. 5. 2 *Chron.* 28. 9. *Pſal.* 69. 26. *Ezek.* 25. 12. *Obad.* v. 10. *Ezek.* 26. 2.

Another objection may be from 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. where Satan is called *the God of this world.*

Anſ. He, who is worſhipped, obeyed, dreaded by ſome as a God, is ſtill a limited Devil. He who hath ſinners at his nod, is ſtill at the beck of the Lord. The common Hang-man hath not the power of life and death, becauſe he is the Sheriff's under-officer. The Devil is an Executioner of Divine Wrath, but no abſolute Lord. *Paul* never meant otherwiſe; for he acknowledgeth the Lord as Supream; who, though he permit Satan to work in the world, is ſtill above him; yea, therefore above him, becauſe he doth permit him.

Quâ perſuaſione ſuffultus *Paulus*, profectionem ſuam quam in uno loco (1 *Theſſ.* 2. 18.) dixerat à Satanâ impeditam fuiſſe: alibi (1 *Cor.* 16. 7.) in Dei permiſſione ſtatuit. *Calv.*

Laſtly,

Lastly, That in 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. *Doth God take care for Oxen?* may be objected.

Ans. The Apostle doth not deny the *Providence* with respect to Oxen; (for that is plainly asserted in Scripture, *Exod.* 9. 3. *Psal.* 8. 7. *Psal.* 114. 14.) but his purpose is to back the Doctrine of Ministerial maintenance from thence; and that, as mystically or typically held forth by the labouring-Oxe, who had the priviledg to be without a muzzle; or rather by arguing *à fortiori*, thus: *Doth God take care for Oxen?* he doth: and therefore, if the Lord would have equity observed towards the labouring-beast, much more should they, who labour in the Lord, have their double honour. See 1 *Tim.* 5. 17, 18. The Lord values a good Minister more than Oxen; though some men, worse than Beasts, value their Oxen more than their Minister. The place then being thus understood, is a proof for the Doctrine of *Providence*: for the great Lord of the World hath an eye, in his *Providence*, on the very dumb Beasts, who have God for their speaker.

CHAP. III.

THE Conſectaries or Inferences from the Doctrine of *Providence*, now follow; which, in ſhort, ſhall be pointed to: A larger amplification is here waved, ſeeing occaſion will be offered to ſay more in the other Parts of this Treatiſe.

Firſt then; It is no leſs dangerous, than erroneous, to deny the *Providence* of God; for, the connivence or winking of *Providence*, is not blindneſs. They who will not ſee God in his *Providence*, may juſtly feel him to their wo. If the Meditation of *Providence* be not a Load-ſtone to draw men from Sin to Virtue; God may juſtly make ſome diſpenſations of his to become a Mill-ſtone: Appoſite and full for this purpoſe, is that in *Zeph.* 1. 12, 13. *And it ſhall come to paſs at that time, that I will ſearch Jeruſalem with candles, and puniſh the men that are ſetled on their lees, that ſay in their hearts, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil: therefore their goods ſhall become a booty, and their houſes a deſolation: They alſo ſhall build houſes, but not inhabit them; and they ſhall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.* See more by way of Commination for their Atheiſtical Reaſonings about *Providence*, in *ver.* 14, 15, 16.

Conni-ventia Dei non eſt cæcitas. *Calv.*

Quod ſi Providentiâ mundus regitur & unius Dei nutu gubernatur, non nos debet antiquitas imperitorum, fabellis ſuis delectata vel capta, ad errorem mutui rapere conſenſus; cum Philoſophorum ſuorum ſententiis refellatur, quibus & rationis & vetuſtatis aſſiſtit authoritas. *Minucius Felix*, in ſuo Oct. p. 61.

2. Behold the Foundation-stone for a religious acknowledgment of the hand of God both in prosperity, and in adversity! The pleasant streams of the one, and the bitter rivulets of the other, flow from the Spring-heads of *Providence*. *Agur* acknowledgeth this in that prayer of his, recorded *Prov.* 30.8. And so *Job* in his doxology or thanksgiving, *Job.* 1. 21. yea, God himself doth attest this in his contest with *Israel*, saying, *For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oyl, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal: therefore behold, I will return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness*, Hos. 2. 8. 9.

Videmus ergo non posse fidem nostra stare firmam, nisi semper occurrat nobis Providentia Dei; quod scilicet in rebus confusis

3. There is a proper and full object for faith and meditation to be conversant about, in order to the tranquillity of the soul, and that in the midst of all the great concussions, terrible aspects of second-causes, windings and turnings of affairs that are or shall be in the world. Let it be considered in whose hand the government of the world is, and then though Heaven and Earth do come together, a gracious heart, and solid quiet, will not be far asunder. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble: therefore will not*

sciat, cur tantum permittat licentiæ reprobis: deinde quorsum evasuri sint eorum conatus, & quis tandem futurus sit exitus. Nisi ergo hoc nobis persuasum sit, Deum arcanâ Providentiâ moderari res turbatas, centies quotidie, imo singulis momentis Satan excuteret nobis fiduciam, quæ debet quiescere in Deo. *Calv.* in *Hab.* 1. v. 12.

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we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midſt of the ſea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains ſhake with the ſwelling thereof. Selah. Pſal. 46. 1, 2, 3. *The Lord is good, a ſtrong-hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that truſt in him: but with an over-running flood he will make an end of the place thereof, and darkneſs ſhall purſue his enemies,* Nahum 1. 7,8. See more, *Rev.* 2.10. and 7. 2,3.

C PART

PART II.

THE various Considerations or Distinctions of *Providence* (so termed for our better apprehension) come now to be spoken unto; and these may be ranged into several orders: as,

1. In respect of the Parts (as some call them), or Form (as others term it), namely, supportation or upholding, and gubernation.

2. In respect of the Object about which *Providence* is conversant.

3. In respect of the Mode or Manner how *Providence* is conversant about matters.

4. In respect of the End, Issues, or Event of *Providence*.

Of these a little in their order.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

PROVIDENCE, as upholding the Creatures, may be conſidered,

1. With reſpect to their Beings: *Neh.9.6. Job* 33.4. *Pſal.* 104.30. *Act.* 17.28.

2. With reſpect to their Well-beings: *Pſal.* 105.37. *Pſal.* 144.12,13,14.

Now oppoſite unto this Conſideration of *Providence*, is *Providence* conſidered as deſerting: As there is *Providence* upholding, ſo there is *Providence* with-holding its influence: *Thou* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *hideſt thy face, they are troubled: thou takeſt away their breath, they dye, and return to their duſt*, Pſal. 104. 29. and 102. ver. 26.

Deſerting-*Providence* reſpects, (1.) the beeings of things as ſuch, *Pſal.* 90. 5. *Jer.* 52.13. *Dan.* 5.30,31.

2. The well-being: *Egypt* to be a Kingdom, but a baſe or low one, *Ezek.* 29.14. *Mephiboſheth* a Man, but a maimed or lame one, 2 *Sam.* 4. 4.

Again, *Providence* as Governing or ruling, may be conſidered,

1. By way of Motion, direction, and ordination of the Motion to ſuch ends and uſes as God intends, *Acts* 17.28. 1 *Kings* 11. 14. *Ezra* 1. 1. *Gen.* 50. 20.

2. By way of Inhibition, or checking the Creatures in their operations; and this is,

1. Absolute, or eminently controlling them, *Exod.* 11. 7. *Exod.*14 22. 2 *Kings* 19. 32. *Dan.* 3. 29. and 6. 22,23. *John* 19.36.

2. Comparative, partial, or in part, 2 *Chron.* 12. 7,8. *Rev.* 2. 10.

CHAP. II.

PROVIDENCE, in regard of the Object, is,

1. *General*, as it respects the whole world, *Psal.* 135. 6. *Prov.*15.3. *Heb.* 1. 3.

2. *Special*, as it respects, (1.) Persons, or intelligent natures. (2.) Things.

1. As it respects Persons, or intelligent Natures; and so it comprehendeth,

1. Angels; and that (1.) Good, *Heb.* 1.7. *Acts* 12. 11. (2.) Bad, who are subjected to *Providence*, 1 *King.* 22. 21,22. *Job* 1. 9,10,11. *Mat.*8 31.

2. Men; and that (1.) singly or particularly, as *Gen.*28. 12,13. *Exod.*2. 6. (2.) Conjunctively or relatively; and that (1.) in regard of Family-relation, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. 1 *King.* 14.10. (2.) In regard of a Political combination, as persons are united under this or that form of Civil Government; all the Governments in the world are under a higher Government: See *Jer.*25.15,to 27.

3. In regard of an Ecclesiastical or Spiritual Society, *Providence* doth signally and more peculiarly respect the Church of Christ,

Deut.

Deut. 26. 48. *Psal.* 135. 4. 1 *Tim.* 4. 10.

Again, *Providence* respects Things, as well as Persons; and that,

1. Animate, which have life; as Trees, Herbs, Fishes, Fowls, Beasts of the field, *Psal.* 104. *Jonah* 1 17. & 4 6. *Mat* 6. 26, 28, 30.

2. Inanimate, without life; *Job* 38. 22, 23, &c. *Psal* 48. 8.

CHAP. III.

PROVIDENCE, in regard of the manner, how conversant about its objects, is variously distinguish't: In the first place, it is Effective, or Permissive.

The former respecteth the production or bringing forth of whatever hath a real or proper beeing, whether natural, moral, spiritual, as *James* 1. 17.

The later respects the anomy, irregularity, warping aside from the Rule of Righteousness; and this as inherent, or adherent to the natures, motions, actions, of intelligent natures, whether Angels or Men. This *Permissive Providence* is not a moral concession, or legitimation, or warranting from Heaven what is done: but a not-hindring by way of physical or natural interposition, or not-putting forth of a force inhibitive or curbing. Neither is it a meer beholding the evils; for there is an *efficacy* of *Providence*, though not an *efficiency* (as the Orthodox term it) with respect to the

sins of men; and there is more in Permission, than an idle contemplation of matters. See *Heb.* 6.3. 2 *Sam.* 12. 11.

Again, *Providence* is (1.) ordinary, which keeps the usual road or instituted order both in naturals and spirituals: See *Psal.* 19. 4, 5. 6. *Jer.* 31.35,36,37. *Rom.* 10.17.

2. Extraordinary, which is opposite to the former, as *John* 10. 12, 13. 2 *Kings* 20.9,10,11. *Acts* 9. 3,4,5.

Here if I might (though I affect not innovations in Divinity) I would distinguish *Extraordinary Providence* into that which is (1) Really and properly miraculous. (2.) Eminently and remarkably wondrous. I may set forth this by an allusive Instance: For a Child to throw a strong Man to the ground, and that by grappling with him hand to hand, may well be interpreted miraculous; there being no proportion of strength in the Child to that of a Mighty man. And yet suppose the man is sitting according to a tottering posture in a Chair, so that his body is in equal poize, a small push of a child sends him head-long to the ground. In like manner *Providence*, by a wonderful conjunction of weak means in themselves, and by opportune application of means, brings forth a work very glorious. See *Judges* 4. 21. and 7. 16, 17, 18. 2 *Chron.* 24. 23, 24.

Lastly, *Providence* is distinguish't into *immediate* and *mediate*. *Immediate* excludes the interposition or intervening of means, instruments which God useth at other times: as,

when

when the Lord himſelf preached to *Adam*, *Gen.* 3.9. *Moſes* lives, but not by the uſe of the creatures, *Exod.* 34. 28.

2. *Mediate*, when the Lord uſeth means, (1.) more common or general, as the Angels for their miniſtry; the Heavens and the Earth for Corn, Wine, and Oyl. See *Pſal.* 148. and *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. (2.) More peculiar, and particularly deſtinated for ſuch ends and purpoſes, *Iſa.* 38. 21. *Acts* 10. 5, 6. the Angel will not there take away *Peter*'s work; he willeth *Cornelius* to ſend for *Simon Peter* (not *Simon* the Tanner) for his Teacher.

Moreover, Means in order to Effects and Conſequents, are,

1. Neceſſary, or definite; which ordinarily work this way, and no other; as, for the Sun to ſhine and give forth heat, *Pſal.* 19. 4, 5, 6.

2. Contingent and indefinite; whoſe effects, before they exiſt, might not ſo have been, as conſidered with their next Cauſes; though otherwiſe in reſpect of God, his will to the contrary, the ſaid effects are neceſſary; So the bones of Chriſt were not broken, *John* 19. 31, 32, 33, with 36.

CHAP. IV.

PROVIDENCE, in regard of the End, Issues, and Events, hath its considerations.

1. The End is ultimate, or last; and that is the Glory of God, *Rom.* 11.32,33,36. or intermediate, which is the creatures serviceableness and usefulness, according to its place or station, in order to the former. So the Heavens and the Earth are Caterers for *Jezreel*, and that to the Lord's glory, whose bounty and mercy are displayed in hearing the Heavens and the Earth for *Jezreel*, Hos. 2. ver. 21, 22.

Again, the Issues of *Providence* respecting matters, are sometimes by way of furthering and succeeding things, so that the ordinary particular End is attained: so when God heareth the Heavens, the Heavens the Earth, the Earth the Corn, and the Wine and Oyl, and they hear *Jezreel*, *Hos.* 2. 21, 22.

Or, secondly, By way of dashing things, notwithstanding a probability of such and such Ends, though not of such Ends as *Providence* intendeth, where and when the Lord crosseth, disappointeth, or thus dasheth in his Dispensations. See *Isa.* 7. 5, 6, 7. *Hag.* 1. 6. 9, 10, 11.

Lastly, The Events of *Providence* are,

1. *Joyful*; which terminate in the good, com-

comfort, happineſs of the Creature, *Exod.* 14. 30, 31. *Eſth.* 9. 22.

Or, ſecondly, *Mournful*; or by way of ſmart, diſtreſs, tribulation; as *Exod.* 14. 27, 28. 2 *Sam.* 1. 12.

Thus I have marſhall'd up the ſeveral Diſtinctions or Conſiderations of *Providence*: There are other ſubordinate Conſiderations of it, yet reducible to ſome of the fore-mentioned Heads of Diſtinction or Conſideration. What thoſe other Conſiderations are, I may only point at.

Providence then may be conſidered as *direct* and *collateral*: An inſtance for the former, is the Lord's ſtirring up *Cyrus* in order to the delivery of his people, *Ezra* 1. An illuſtration for the later, may be the *Philiſtines* invading the Land; which (at leaſt in regard of any ſuch thing intended by them) was a by-blow for *David*'s deliverance, 1 *Sam.* 23. 26, 27.

Again, *Providence* may be conſidered as more *plain* and *obvious*, ſo that he who runs may read; or more *dark* and *intricate*. Moreover, It may be conſidered as *ſingle* or *in part*; and as *copulative*, as when the whole of a buſineſs is laid together.

Laſtly, It may be conſidered, as *concealing for a time*; or *revealing*, *bringing things to light*. Theſe and the like Conſiderations being exemplified in the following pages, I forbear enlargement here, and ſo paſs on to the Third Part of the Treatiſe.

PART

Part III.

THE Extent of *Providence* hath been touched by an enumeration of Creatures to which it extendeth, as in the former Part of this Treatise hath been shewed. To avoid then prolixity and repetition, I shall here (1.) Prove the extent of *Providence* to all the Creatures. (2.) Improve this Doctrine of General Extent, by giving the Consectaries or Inferences from thence; and under this later, shall launch forth into some particular arms of this Sea, where the passage may seem more difficult by reason of the noise of the Water-spouts, the swelling of the waves and billows to the contrary. And first then of the first.

CHAP. I.

THE proof for the Extent of *Providence*, appeareth divers ways, as here briefly to be insisted on, followeth.

1. From

1. From expreſs aſſertions in Scripture: The aſſertions have their latitude; they know no bounds of mans reſtriction: ſo *Neh.* 9. 6. *Thou even thou art Lord alone; thou haſt made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their hoſt, the earth and all things therein, and thou preſerveſt them all, and the hoſt of heaven worſhippeth thee,* ſay that godly company there on their ſolemn Day of Humiliation, *v.* 1, 4. In the Ark God not only took care of *Noah*, but of the creatures: It's an obſervable expreſſion which is in *Gen.* 8. 1. *And God remembred Noah and every living thing, and all the cattel that was with him in the Ark.* To this add, what the Lord himſelf aſſerteth to this purpoſe in the 38,39, 40,41 chapters of *Job.*

2. From God; without whoſe will, and againſt whoſe will (the will of Purpoſe, not of Precept, diſcovered in his Law-giving Rules for man), nothing comes to paſs. *Are not two ſparrows* (ſaith Chriſt) *ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the ground without your Father,* Mat. 10. 29. *Who is he that ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not?* Lam. 3. 37.

3. From the Creatures; which becauſe they are Creatures, are not independent, or exempted in point of dependency, from the firſt Cauſe. *Theſe* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *wait all upon thee, that thou mayſt give them their meat in due ſeaſon,* Pſal. 104. 27. See further other places of Scripture, which are quoted upon other particular accounts, though upon the general account of *Providence* they are repeated, as *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. *Acts* 17. 28.

4. From

4. From the cognation or kinship of *Providence* with *Creation*. *Providence* (as was before intimated) is a kind of continued Creation. God not only gives the creatures their beds to lye on, but (bear with the phrase) makes their beds. As Creation therefore is extensive to the creatures without exception, as *Gen.* 1. 25. so likewise is the Lord's upholding them and governing them to his own glory. See *Psal.* 89. 12, 13, &c.

CHAP. II.

FIRST then, from the Doctrine of the Universal extent of *God's Providence*, it may be evinced, That vain and false is the conceit of those, who though they allow a *Providence*, yet narrow it in regard of the Object; as if so be *Providence* reached to some of the more noble of the creatures, and not to others. Whatever the Philosophy, or rather the extravagancy of Philosophy, dictates; true Divinity lesseneth otherwise. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in the heaven, and in the earth, in the seas, and in all deep places*, Psal. 135. 6.

Nam ex creatione colligit Deum actualiter moderari quicquid in cœlo & terrâ agitur: quia absurdum esset, cœlos à Deo creatos fortuitò nunc volvi; & res vel hominum arbitrio, vel temere & casu misceri in terrâ; quia proprium Dei est tueri & gubernare quicquid condidit: Ne cum profanis hominibus imaginemur pulcherrimi hujus theatri conspectu otiosum frui. *Calv.* ad locum.

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In the second place then; Here is a large field for contemplation of, and meditation on, the *Providence* of God. *Providence*, which reacheth to all things, teacheth man to eye God in every thing, and to beware of slighting him in any thing. There are five tracks or paths of *Providence* which here I shall point out at, and so encourage the Christian to set foot in them for his good and benefit.

The first is, the path which *Providence* beats out through the heads and hearts of men, in Civils as well as Sacreds.

2. The cleanly way of *Providence* through the dirt and mire of men's sins.

3. The straight road of *Providence*, notwithstanding the many lanes, windings, and turnings of contingencies.

4. The Church-yard-way, or the sable walk of *Providence* to *Golgotha*, or the place of skulls.

5. That lesser, trivial, and scarce a way of *Providence* (to carnal reason) in matters of smaller moment.

All these I may well call the beaten paths of *Providence*. I see no reason why we should not eye the Almighty in these paths. Be not therefore (O Christian) at a stand here, as they were at the place where *Asahel* fell down, 2 *Sam.* 2. 23. Here is no bloody *Asahel*; I mean, no such black and bloody notions in asserting the walk of the Lord in these paths.

SECT.

SECT. 1.

That the *Providence* of God reacheth to the Wills of men, is questioned by some; but truly asserted by others, and that according to the sacred Scriptures: For,

1. They who seem to be most arbitrary in the world, are yet asserted to be in subjection to *Providence:* the Great-ones of the World owe homage to the Great Lord of the World; though they are Lords of men, yet not of *Providence. Solomon*, who saith of a King, *He doth whatsoever pleaseth him*, Eccles. 8. 3. saith also, *The Kings heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will*, Prov. 21. 1. Christ averreth to *Pilate's* face, saying, *Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above*, John 19. 11.

2. The reason why men take this or that course, is in some respect attributed to the *Providence* of God, as over-ruling. *Sampson* is for a *Timnah*-Damosel; his Parents knew that *it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines*, Judg. 14. 4. *Saul went home to Gilead, and there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched*, 1 Sam. 10. 26. See more 1 *Sam.* 11. 5, 6. *Mat.* 21. 2, 3.

3. The Prayers of Saints do imply the truth of this assertion. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin*, saith *Jacob* to his sons, who were now setting forward to *Egypt*, Gen. 43. 14.

43. 14. See also *Neh.* 2. 4. with the following verses, which give to understand *Nehemiah*'s belief in this point; and so likewise that of the Apostle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2.

4. There are clear instances of God's inclining, winding and turning the hearts of men, and that contrary to their natural byas and probable inducements which might sway them another way. *Laban* lays not violent hands on *Jacob*, though covetousness and fury might edg him on so to do. See *Gen.* 31. 7. 29. *Esau* had an inveterate hatred against *Jacob*; and howbeit he is kind and complemental, *Gen.* 33. 4. The Lord gave the *Israelites* favour in the sight of the *Egyptians*, *Exod.* 12. 36. *Cyrus* let go the captives without price and reward, *Isa.* 45. 13.

5. The *Providence* of God is conversant about the senses of men. *The hearing-ear and the seeing-eye, the Lord hath made even both of them*, Prov. 20. 12. Notable instances there are of the marvellous extent of *Providence* to the eyes and ears of men! Witness the *Sodomites* blindness, or want of discerning *Lot*'s dore, *Gen.* 19. 11. The *Syrians* were led in a dance by the Prophet to *Samaria*, 2 Kings 6. 18. In like sort the Lord is said to make the Host of the *Syrians* to hear a noise of Chariots, and a noise of Horses, even the noise of a great Host, 2 *Kings* 7. 6. Now *Providence*, which thus walketh in the Porch of men's senses, walks from thence into the Parlour of the nobler faculties of men's Understandings, Wills, Affections. There is a natural intercourse

course betwixt this lower and upper house of man. Reason not only takes a true, but even a false alarum of the Senses, as in the place last mentioned; *The King of Israel* (said the *Syrians* one unto another) *hath hired against us the Kings of the Hittites, and the Kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us: wherefore they arose and fled*, 2 Kings 7. 6, 7.

6. The considerable revolutions, changes, issues of matters in the World, turn in, and turn out at the doors of men's hearts. What is stated and accorded at this Council-board, hath a considerable influx on the affairs of Nations and Kingdoms. *Ahasuerus* his heart is towards *Esther*, chap. 5. 3. and 7. 3, 4. and what a change follows both in Court and Countrey, after, the following History declares. Let a *Darius* be partially won to own *Daniel*'s God, and what a change is there in his Dominions? *Dan.* 6. 26, 27. *Augustus Cæsar* is resolved on a Tax, and what an influence hath that throughout the *Roman* Empire? *Luke* 2. 1.

Lastly, The Objections to the contrary, namely, That *Providence* doth not thus reach unto the hearts of men, have no weight in them.

First, It's objected, Where is then man's liberty?

Ans. Where is, on the other hand, the Lord's Prerogative-Royal over all men, and all of men? Is not the Lord, King of kings, and Lord of lords? Hath not he the supream

Agency

Agency in and over the hearts of men? Do not men think, adviſe, determine thus and thus? and yet *the anſwer of the tongue is from the Lord*, ſee *Prov.* 16. 1.

2. Let the Objectors reconcile man's liberty with the fore-knowledg of God (which is not denied); and the like reconciliation may be found with the Will and Providence of God. Look at what door the fore-knowledg of God goes out at, without a juſtle at the wills of men: at the ſame door the Will and Providence of the All-wiſe God can and do go forth.

3. The Scripture hath plain and full inſtances of accord betwixt man's liberty and *Divine Providence*. *Saul* acted freely in ſeeking his Father's Aſſes; and yet the Lord had told *Samuel* before, *I will ſend thee a man out of the land of Benjamin*, 1 Sam. 9. 16. The King of *Babylon* reſolveth, and that freely (having uſed his divination), to go againſt *Jeruſalem*; and this holds correſpondence with the threatnings of God by the Prophet, againſt the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, Ezek. 21. 18.

4. Man therefore acts freely, becauſe God hath conſtituted in him a freedom from coaction and bruti ſh determination. The Lord hath embelliſht the ſoul of man with the noble faculties of Reaſon, and Election, ſo as that he differs from a Beaſt; and hath a liberty in acting, though not a liberty of abſolute independency. He who learns to ſwim, puts forth his hands and feet freely, though another hold and guide his head. And this may ſerve

by way of reply to that first Objection.

2. It may be asked by some, Would not this Doctrine make God the Author of sin?

Ans. 1. Would not a denial of God's *Providence* about the Wills of men, make them the Authors of Grace? Surely such Doctrine which robbeth the Lord of his glory in working on, changing, and renewing the hearts of men, is not of God, *Isa.* 26. 12. *Phil.* 2. 13. 1 *Cor.* 4. 7.

2. It may be replied then to the Objection, with that of the Apostle to the like; *God forbid*; *for then how shall God judg the world?* Rom. 3. 6. The holy God, who made the house of man's soul, and the several rooms thereof, knows all the nasty corners of the sinner, and can go in and out in his *Providence*, without defiling the garment of his Holiness. The Sun shines on the Dunghill, and is not therefore a Dunghill-light. Whatever the *Assyrian* was, and his design was, all bad enough; yet God himself distinguisheth betwixt his own work, and the *Assyrians* barbarous Villanies, *Isa.* 10. 12. We are not then to make a confusion, where the Lord maketh a distinction. What is proper to sinful and sinning man, let man have: what is proper to a Wise, Just, Powerful God, let God have. He that holds a stone and a piece of Cork under water, is not because he withdraws his hand, the proper intrinsecal cause of the one its sinking, and the others its swimming; for both

both ſtone and cork do equally participate in the hand: the ſtone doth not therefore ſink, becauſe the hand is withdrawn; for then the cork ſhould ſink too: and the cork doth not therefore ſwim; for then the ſtone ſhould ſwim too. This may a little illuſtrate the matter to weaker capacities. It's a myſtery, and hath its knots; yet it's unreaſonable therefore ſtill to diſpute, and not to believe. The Scripture doth plainly lay before us, how God, Men, and the Devil, had a concurrence in *Job*'s caſe; a work of *Providence* there was, though not for the like end, and in the like manner, with a malicious Devil, and plundering *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans*: *Providence* knoweth how to do cleanly work by the foul hands of ſinners. *Caiaphas* was the Trumpet of a glorious Prophecy: He is like a ſervant who broacheth a barrel in a drunken humour: the Maſter of the houſe may well puniſh the ſervant for his luſt, and yet wiſely order the veſſel to be drawn forth for the uſe of the family. It's wonderful indeed to conſider, how the Lord's arrows are ſhot in men's bows! and how he throws a Jewel in their Slings! But ſo it is, as it appears notably from that inſtance of *Caiaphas*. See *John* 11. 50,51. with 47,48,49,53.

The Conſectaries from the Doctrine of *Providence*, as here reſpecting the hearts of men, are theſe:

1. Abſurd then is the conceit of thoſe who

would have men exempted from the influx and conflux of *Providence*. The Creatures of a lower form are under the Law of *Providence*, and that too in reference to man, *Psal.*104.14. And are not men much better than they, as Christ argueth, *Mat.*6.26. There is little reason, and less divinity, to deny the subjection of the greatest of men to the controlling *Providence* of God. *Daniel* preached no such Doctrine at Court; he asserts before *Belshazzar*, saying, *The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified*, Dan. 5. 23.

2. There is reason to eye God's *Providence* even then, when men's hearts are hardned and filled with fury towards persons. True it is, God instilleth no venom of sin into their hearts; but yet there is a wise and righteous hand of *Providence* in this case, ---*He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants*, Psal. 105. 25. Men would do well therefore, not only to look upward to God, but also inward on their souls, and backward on their lives; and may they not cry out then, Men have done us wrong, but God hath done us right? The sons of *Belial* are injurious, but the hand of *Providence* is righteous; righteous, righteous!

3. It is a pious and prudent course to begin with God, when we have to do with men, especially in matters of greater consequence. So did *Esther*; she fasts, and her Maidens, the Ladies of Honour fast; and the Jews in *Shushan*, the Metropolitan City, fast, before she ma-

maketh her addreſs to *Ahaſuerus*, *Eſth.* 4. 16. and ſurely there is encouragement ſo to do; for the Lord can work more ways than we can imagine, on the hearts of men: ſometimes he knocks out ſparks of pity from flinty hearts, *Pſal.* 106. 46. *He made them alſo to be pitied of all thoſe that carried them captives.* At other times he awes, ſtartles, and doth bring to paſs great things by fears, which take hold on men's ſouls with their tenter-hooks. See *Joſh.* 2. 11. *Act.* 22. 29.

4. Know to whom the tribute of praiſe and thankfulneſs is due for what of *Providence* is diſplayed in the conveyance of mercies by a touch from Heaven this and that way, on the hearts of men on earth. *David* hath a ſong for God's delivering him out of the hand of *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* 22. chap. Now one way of *David*'s delivery, was by an acceſs of *Providence* to *Saul*'s heart, 1 *Sam.* 26. 25, *&c.* with chap. 27. v. 4. The ſame man of God hath left records of God's *Providence* in his deliverance from *Achiſh*, who look't on *David* as a mad-man, and ſo ſlighted him without trial made, or making ſure work with him, who though he had been under a phrenſie for the preſent, might after become a ſober Captain to lead an Army againſt the uncircumciſed; ſee *Pſal.* 34. with 1 *Sam.* 21. 14, 15. *Auſtin* relates, how by the loſs of his way, he found his ſafety in eſcaping the bloody *Donatiſts*, who had way-laid him. There was a good man, who travelling on the road, and intending for a certain place, meets with one party, and asketh the way to Enchirid.

another place for which he intended not, and which place he very well knew. The man sets forward, and meets with another party, and demandeth alike from him, and puts forwards to the place he intended for; but not the place he so asked for. A while after, an Officer unknown to him, was following him on the scent; and meeting with the first party, describes the man whom he hunted for, asking whether the party saw such an one? who replies, Yea, and he asked the way to such a place. The like answer was given him by the next party, who met him. And so upon this light given, the man groped in the dark, and the poor Minister escaped the snare, having had a kind of *Providential* Comment with *Austin* on that Text, Prov. 20.24. *Man's goings are of the Lord.*

SECT. 2.

That the *Providence* of God reacheth to the sins of men; yet so, that it cannot truly be impeach't with pollution (for as wicked men participate not in the righteousness of God, though he useth them, their lusts, in a righteous way, for his glory: so *Providence* participates not in men's unrighteousness, though they are the righteous instruments of *Providence*, as *Jehu*, and the *Assyrian* King) hath before occationally been intimated: the less here may therefore be spoken; and that the rather, seeing more will be in another Part of this Treatise. I shall then lay down some Arguments in the general for the proving of it;

and

and then adjoin some proper instructions from thence. The Arguments from Scripture are as following.

1. The punishing of sin with sin, or sin as a righteous judgment of God, is ascribed to God, and owned by Him. Thus *Ezek.* 14. 9. *And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from my people Israel.* Rom. 1. 24. *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.* 2 Thes. 2. 11. *And for this cause he shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lye.*

Causa igitur obdurationis est voluntas avertens & hæc initiat, voluntas resistens & hæc continuat; Culpa promerens & hæc confirmat: Deus gratiam non dans; & hæc non liberat. Deus juste puniens & hæc ordinat. *Gerson* in 2da parte Operum. p. 349.

2. The handing good in and through the sins of men, is the work of *Providence.* The good handed, is (1.) Spiritual: So the death of Christ, with the inestimable benefits flowing from thence, is set forward by the sin of the *Jews*; *Him being delivered* (saith Peter) *by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledg of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*, Act. 2.23. The conversion of souls, and the exercise of converted ones graces, are set forward by the furies of men, through an over-ruling *Providence*; see *Act.* 8. 5,6,7,8. *Phil.* 1. 12,13,14. (2.) Good temporal; or as it referreth to the outward man, is brought about

this way: *Joseph* acknowledgeth so, *Gen.* 45. 7, 8, 9. We read in 1 *Sam.* 30. 13, 14, 15. how the barbarous cruelty of an *Amalekite* towards his sick servant, was an introduction to the recovery of captives and goods, which the Enemy there had carried away from *Ziklag*. I have read how the Protestants of *Bezziers* in *France*, were wonderfully preserved on this wise: A drunken Drummer going to his Quarters in the mid-night, rings out the larum-bell of the Town, and at that very instant the Enemies were at the Wall seeking and essaying for a surprisal of the Town.

3. If God's *Providence* be knock't off from sinners, his Government will be little, or no Government: for, the greatest part of men in the world are such, in whose hearts sin hath its regency: see 1 *John* 5. 19. *Ephes.* 2. 2. this then were to narrow the supream regency of Christ, who rules in the midst of enemies, according to that in *Psal.* 110. 2.

Scriptura ostendit non solum bonas renatorum voluntates, quas ipse facit ex malis; verum etiam illas, quæ conservant sæculi creaturam, ita esse in Dei potestate, ut eas, quò voluerit, quando voluerit faciat inclinari, vel ad beneficia quibusdam præstanda, vel ad pœna; quibusdam ingerendas, sicut ipse judicat; occultissimo quidem judicio, sed fine dubitatione justissimo. *August.* de grat. & lib. arbit. cap. 20.

4. God hath his various ways of access to mens sinful and sinning dispositions, judg-

Manifestum est, operari Deum in cordibus hominum ad inclinandas eorum voluntates quocunq; voluerit, sive ad bona pro misericordiâ: sive ad mala pro meritis eorum, judicio utiq; suo aliquando aperto, aliquando occulto, semper autem justo. *August.* de grat. & lib. arbit c. 21.

ments,

ments, and affections; ſome of theſe ways are explicable, others inexplicable, yet all righteous. We may ſafely wade in theſe waters, having the Scripture for a guide. Three ways, amongſt others, as explicable in compariſon of other foot-ſteps of *Providence* without foot-ſteps to be ſeen and traced by the weak eye of mortal man, the Scripture points out: as, (1.) That way of *Providence* in the denial and ſubſtraction of ſuch help, aſſiſtance, proſperous influence, which the Lord is not obliged to give or continue. Thus the Lord, in times paſt, ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways, *Acts* 14. 16. and ſo the Spirit of the Lord departed from *Saul*; and no wonder then if the ſpirit, in regard of political influences, breathes not as formerly, that both Family and Kingdom go down the wind. See 1 *Sam.* 16. 14. 1 *Chron.* 10. 13, 14. Moreover, another way how *Providence* is concerned here, is, by letting looſe Satan this and that way to work. Satan is a skilful Engineer, to go through with the black work which by a Divine permiſſion and commiſſion he undertakes: ſo its ſaid, *There came forth a ſpirit, and ſtood before the Lord, and ſaid, I will perſwade him: and the Lord ſaid unto him, Wherewith? and he ſaid, I will go forth, and I will be a lying ſpirit in the mouth of all his prophets: and he ſaid, Thou ſhalt perſwade him, and prevail alſo: go forth and do ſo,* 1 King. 22. 21, 22.

Laſtly, There are occaſions offered, whereby wicked ones, yet through their own luſts, are enſnared. The waters of the Sanctuary

are

are pure and good; men's lusts, like lime, are inflamed, when these waters are providentially cast on them. *Amaziah* is causlesly offended with wholsome counsel. The bridle to check sin, becomes a spurr to edg him on in the road-way of sin, where he meets with a break-neck fall at last, 2 *Chron.* 25. 15, 16. Pertinent for this purpose is that in *Isa.* 6. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy*, &c. and that in *Isa.* 28. 13. *The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little; that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.* And thus for the Arguments; the Instructions follow.

1. Take no encouragement to sin, because God's *Providence* is righteously versant about sin. Some there were in *Paul*'s days, who did fly-blow his Doctrine, and pretend absurdities from thence, *Rom.* 3. 8. On what hindg their corrupt reasoning did hang, is intimated, *v.* 5. The Apostle doth reply there, as one well ob-
Dr. Sclater serveth, (1.) by way of caution, *I speak after, or according to man*; that is, not in mine own person, as if I either approved or devised such a deduction. 2. By way of detestation, *God forbid*! that shews his abhorrency 3. By way of confutation, *else how shall God judg the world?* The manner of answer may in Logick seem absurd, but is in Christianity the best that can be shaped to deniers of Principles; neither was it want of skill that made the Apostle deny the

the conclusion; but wisdom rather, to direct God's children how to carry themselves towards such as question undoubted Principles: still hold evident truths; yea, though thou know not how to assayl doubts raised by men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth--- The direct answer is not here expressed by the Apostle; partly, for the cavil is so odious, that it required rather detestation than answer; partly, because the answer was so obvious, that any man might frame it: See what it is; the answer is on this manner; That it followeth not, because the illustration of God's glory flows not from our sins, either by the nature of them, or by the intention of the committer; but by accident rather.

2. Make not apologies and defences for sin comitted, by way of reflection on the *Providence* of God. There is an evil this way. *Adam* saith, *The woman whom thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*, Gen. 3.12. *Aaron* doth little less than glance at *Providence*, in giving a form to the Calf, *I said unto them* (saith he to *Moses*) *whosoever hath any gold, let him break it off: so they gave it me, then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this Calf*, Exod. 32. 24.

3. Eye the *Providence* of God in and about sin; so as to admire, love, and thank him, who is wonderfully gracious, even when men are monstrously vicious. *Joseph* did look through the villanies of his brethren, to the All-wise *Providence* of God, *Gen.* 50.20. *Peter*, who arraigns the Jews of Murder, in *Acts* 2. 23.

breaks

breaks forth into Doxology, or large Encomion of the free-grace of God, displayed in the death and resurrection of Christ, whom the Jews had so barbarously murdered. See 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4.

SECT. 3.

What is meant by Contingents here, may be demanded by some of a weaker understanding. I shall therefore premise a few things, before I close in with the proof of the extent of *Providence* to these. Contingents then in the general are such, which according to their proper nature in themselves considered, have an hability, propensity, or inclination, to act this way or that, and to fall out this way or that; and may here be considered three ways.

1. Contingents are considered, (1.) in equal balance; so that the effect and consequent, before it is, is not determinable more one way, than another. (2.) As having a propendulous and approaching propensity to one way, more than another.

2. Contingents are considered, (1.) in regard of natural things; these may for distinction sake be termed Casual. (2.) In regard of voluntary Agents: Thus the acts of the Will are accounted Contingent, in respect of the different objects about which they are taken

ken up; and also in respect of one and the same object, but as differently versant about it, whether as willing, or nilling.

3. Contingents are considered as single; or implicated, so that there is a combination or conjunction of them as casual, or voluntary, or both. An exemplification hereof is in *Joseph* his case; there was an heap of Contingencies, if we consider, his Father's sending him to his brethren, or not sending him; his brethren's so acting as they did, or not so acting; the *Ismaelites* passing by at that time, or not passing by; their buying him, or not buying of him: moreover it is said, *Joseph* was cast into the pit, and the pit was empty, there was no water in it, *Gen.* 37. 24. that there was a pit there nigh at hand; and that this pit, which was receptive of water, and probably destinated for that end, was now without water, is all contingent. Here we have a Chain of Contingencies, some links whereof will contribute to the proof of the matter in hand in what now followeth, both by way of argument and instruction.

First then, the Scripture plainly asserts the extent of *Providence* to contingent matters. *Solomon*, who had made a deep search both into the works of *Creation* and *Providence*, attesteth this; and that, (1.) with respect to voluntary Contingents. *Prov.* 16. 1. *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.* Men think to bring forth this and

and that dish on the table, and in this or that order; but there is a wise controlling *Providence*; such and such dishes come not on the table, the Council-table; or not in that order are they placed, as was intended.

Sæpe apud se constituunt homines politici quid

in confessu judicum, ad milites, ad populum, apud principes dicturi sint: sed responsionem linguæ, Deus pro sua Providentia temperat. Exempla extant oratorum, qui in magna frequentiâ hominum turpiter obmutuerunt. Concionatores sæpè rem aliquam, diligenter meditantur: postquam vero suggestum conscendunt & omnium oculos in se conversos vident, trepidant & quæ diligenter meditati sunt, quemadmodum optarent, proferre non possunt. Mala etiam sibi dicendi homines proponunt, sed, nisi Deus justo judicio eos loqui permittat quod volunt, nequaquam possunt. Exemplo res erit manifesta. Balaam ariolus, corruptus pecuniâ regis Ammonitici, devovere Israelitas statuerat sed velit, nolit, bona imprecari eis cogitur. Quod de sermone dicitur, multo magis de factis est intelligendum. *Lavat.* Com. in locum.

Again, (2.) with respect to Contingents natural, or casual; and so in the same Chapter it is said, *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*, v. 33. What is more contingent in it self, than a Lot? yet here is the disposing-hand of *Providence* seen. Exemplifications there are for this in *Achan*: the tribe of *Judah* was taken, then the family, and then the person of the family, *Josh.* 7. 16, 17. and so likewise in *Saul*, see 1 *Sam.* 10. 21, 22. Thus we have the testimony of *Solomon*; and yet behold a greater than *Solomon* doth witness the same: for, what more contingent, than for a Sparrow to be taken in net, or killed otherwise; and yet saith Christ, *Are not*

two

*two ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall to the ground without your Father: Mat.*10.29.

Secondly, If Contingents were without the bridle of *Providence*, God ſhould be ſome petty Lord, not an Abſolute and Univerſal Governour over the World: yea, remove Contingents, and farewel to the Government of the World. Let theſe be dumb Cyphers in the Table of *Providence*, and the ſpeaking Figures will become ſilent ones. To judg by way of proportion; let there be a ſurvey taken of the *Providence* of God in the caſe of *Joſeph*, ſet by the Contingencies, and what becomes of that Map or Landskip of *Providence*? Certainly the Province of Contingents is of vaſt extent; ſo much may be gathered from that paſſage, whether of the wiſe man, or the fooliſh man, brought in by the Wiſe man, yet ſpeaking truth in regard of the extent of Contingencies, Eccleſ.9.11. *Time and chance happeneth to all.*

Thirdly, Matters of conſiderable and great conſequence, hang on this nail of Contingencie: As,

1. The prevention of great dangers. A contingent-diſpenſation doth ſet a guard to wonder. *Joſeph* his life was in an ordinary way (if not ſomewhat extraordinary) ſaved by the empty pit, and the Merchants, who did traffick with his brethren for ſuch living Goods. And ſo *Moſes* his life did hang on the cord of Contingencies, ſee *Exod.*2,5,6.

2. An

2. An in-let to great stirrs, tumults, and combustions, is by virtue of a Contingency. The coal of an intestine warr was blown by *Sheba*, who happened (as it is said) to be there: 2 *Sam.* 20. 1. see also *Judg.* 8 1,2,3.

3. Great advancements are brought about by Contingencies. The Butler opens his mouth at Court for *Joseph*; he was before silent; ingratitude had set a Padlock on his lips, as himself acknowledgeth, *Gen.* 41. 9. *Esther* passed to her Royal Palace through several doors of Contingencies. *Mordecai* likewise he finds Contingencies to be the golden stirrop to his Honours: see *Esth.* 2. 21, 22, 23. and chap. 6. 1, 2, 3.

4. The invention of Arts, and things of considerable consequence, have drawn their first breath by Contingency. The invention of Guns, that deadly instrument in warr, which some think to be hinted in that of *Rev.* 9. 17. is reported to be ushered into the world by a spark of fire falling into a Mortar of sulphureous matter, and so gave an occasion for an essay what Powder would do in a more exact Engine. *Acosta* relates how the Golden Mines of the Mountain *Potozi*, were found out by an *Indian* going to hunt for Venison; in the pursuit of the Beast, the *Indian* laboured to ascend a steep place, and laying hold on certain Plants, which yeilding, he espied in the hole, or root, metal; and so by this means that Golden Mountain was discovered.

Brightm in locum.

History of the Indies, lib. 3. c. 6

5. By Contingent-dispensations the Lord afflicteth the sons of men as he pleaseth. The

blusters

bluſtering wind of diſtreſs gets in at this hole. *Jonah*'s Wind, Whale, Gourd, Worm, were all Contingents. *Job* in like ſort drank deep of the Lord's bitter cup; Contingent-*Providence* held forth the cup to that ſervant of the Lord. *Thou breakeſt* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *the ſhips of Tarſhiſh with an eaſt-wind*, Pſal. 48.7.

Laſtly, Notable exploits, victories, are hereby brought about. That *Egyptian* (by whoſe diſcoveries made, *David* became ſo victorious, 1 *Sam.*30) might not have been ſo left by his Maſter, or elſe have had ſome killing-potion of Soldier-like Phyſick adminiſtred to him to put him out of pain: his not being knock't on the head, proves the means for *David*'s knocking down the *Amalekites*, who (as it happened) were eating, drinking, and dancing, when *David* falls foul on them, 1 *Sam.* 30. 16,17. It is obſervable, how in Naval-fights, the Wind, which is a Contingent at ſuch a nick of time, is of great conſequence. And not only at ſea, but at land, doth Victory hang on Contingency. The Prophet *Iſaiah* gives a deſcription of an happy concurrency of Contingencies, in order to a triumphing-conqueſt; and all this with ſubordination to *Divine Providence*. *And he will lift up an enſign to the nations from afar, and will hiſs unto them from the end of the earth; and behold, they ſhall come with ſpeed ſwiftly: none ſhall be weary, nor ſtumble amongſt them; none ſhall ſlumber nor ſleep; neither ſhall the girdle of their loins be looſed; nor the latchet of their ſhooes be broken*, Iſa. 5. 26, 27.

Fourthly, In the glass of Contingent-dispensations, may be seen the Attributes of God in a glorious equipage: As,

1. The *Power* of God, which is notably displayed in the Winds, Seas, &c. *Psal.* 147. 18. 2 *Chron.* 20. 37.

2. *Mercy* of God, as in the preservation of *Joseph*, *Moses*, and *David*, with others.

3. The *Justice* of God; as when the two Bears came out of the Wood, and devour'd forty and two Children, 2 *King.* 2. 23, 24.

4. The *Verity* or *Truth* of God. *Samuel* anoints *Saul* Captain over the Lord's Inheritance, 1 *Sam.* 10. 1. After this, the Lot findeth out *Saul*, though he hid himself amongst the stuff, *v.* 20, 21, 22. The Land of *Canaan* was divided by lot; and the division holdeth correspondence with the Prophecy of *Jacob* before, as may be instanced in *Zebulun*, Gen. 49. 13. with *Isa.* 9. 1. *Josh.* 9. 10, 11.

5. The *Wisdom* of God: By unthought-of Contingencies matters are brought to pass in God's time. In *Joseph*'s case all the Contingents were the Bridg of *Providence* for the Dreams to pass over into the Land of *Egypt* for their real accomplishment.

Having thus given the proof for the extent of *Providence* to contingent matters; there are these Lessons or Instructions which are of use.

1. There is no reason to slight Contingent-dispensations. The same Will of God is the

the foundation of Contingents, which is of Neceſſaries, or things which are not ſo in themſelves conſidered as Contingent: A Sparrow hath not the like principle of life as an Angel, or Man; and yet the Sparrow falls not to the ground without the will of the Father, *Mat.* 10.29. Moreover, as hath been intimated, God doth notably diſplay his glory by a confederation or concatenation of Contingents. Make not leight then of the leaſt link of the Chain. Remember who couples all together, and how he uſeth it.

2. Here is a check for the proud and inſulting Adverſaries of the Church. How eaſily can God, by a Contingent-diſpenſation, preſent them with ſuch a ſnarled knot which ſhall be too hard for mortal fingers to unty? *Haman* was wonderfully baffled in his Projects, and that by a juncture of Contingencies. The proudeſt Child of *Haman* hath no reaſon to boaſt of to morrow; for the morrow may bring forth the death of the Plot, and the burial of the Plotter. There are Contingencies, which to man's apprehenſion, at the firſt, ſeem no otherwiſe than ſo many looſe ſtraws; but with theſe ſtraws, artificially twiſted together by the hand of *Providence*, a Rope is made no leſs ſtrong to bind, than Chains and Fetters of Iron.

3. There is great encouragement to live in dependance on God for proviſion and protection. Contingent-diſpenſations are oftentimes the Saints Exchequer and Life-guard. If one had ask'd a godly *Iſraelite* in the Wil-

derneſs, ſaying, Where is your food? He muſt have anſwered, Above in the Clouds (a very high Cupboard, out of the Children's reach), but on the morrow it will be had out from thence. Again, if it had been ſaid, What if an Enemy ſhall fall on you? It might have been replied, That ſuch a blow happened to the *Egyptians* behind, as no need to fear them for one Forty years: and ſuch fears had fallen in upon the hearts of the *Canaanites*, before them; ſo that there's little ground to be diſmayed. Thus, through *Providence*, the *Egyptians* Frenzy at the Red-ſea, and the *Canaanites* Palſey, was the means of the *Iſraelites* ſafety.

4. Take notice of Mercies conveyed on the wings of Contingent-diſpenſations. In this Treaſure-houſe are Mercies of all ſorts. The woman of *Samaria* happened to come in a good time to *Jacob*'s Well, where the Fountain of Life was open for her, *Joh.* 4,6,7. *Ruth* goes a gleaning, and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to *Boaz*, as it is ſaid, *Ruth* 2, 3. and from a Gleaner ſhe becomes a Miſtreſs in *Boaz* his Family, to whom ſhe married, and at marriage hath the prayers of the good people in *Bethlehem*; which prayers of her neighbours had a glorious iſſue; no leſs than Grandfather to a King is born to the joy of *Naomi*, *Boaz*, *Ruth*, and the reſt of the people of *Bethlehem*: See *Ruth* 4. 11. to the end.

SECT.

SECT. 4.

That the *Providence* of God extendeth to the deaths of men, may be illuſtrated,

1. More generally.
2. Particularly.

Firſt, In the general, It appears from theſe and the like Arguments.

1. God giveth life; and no longer than he upholds life, doth it laſt. *Thou (ſaith Moſes) carrieſt them away as with a flood*, Pſal. 90. 5. The Jews went about to kill *Paul*, yet their deſign was ineffectual; as *Paul* giveth the reaſon, ſaying, *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day*, Acts 26. 21, 22.

2. If the *Providence* of God ſtoops to a Sparrow's falling on the ground, why not to the grave of a Man? and yet Sparrows are not long-liv'd birds, as Naturaliſts obſerve: they are birds of little value too. To deny then the inference from Sparrows to Men, is to aſperſe our Saviour's Logick, for ſo is the ſcope of the Argument urged, *Mat.* 10. 29. with 31.

3. Death is an Evil of ſmart; and ſhall there be *any evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* Amos 3. 6.

4. On the death of ſome perſons, the adverſity of a whole Nation is uſhered in: that is a ſignificant place of Scripture for this purpoſe, in Lam. 4 20. *The breath of our noſtrils,*

the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen. And thus briefly in the general.

Secondly, In the next place, more particularly, Consider the extent of *Providence*,

1. To the Kinds of death.
2. To the Timing of death.

First, As for the Kinds of death, they may be distinguisht thus:

1. Natural; as being affixt to nature since the fall of our first Parents, *Gen.* 3. 19. By natural death here, is understood the dissolution of man from Principles of Mortality within, though there should not be any violence from without: Thus some, according to the Providential disposition of the Almighty, come to *the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season*, Job 5. 26. see for this *Deut.* 34. 5. *Psal.* 90. 10.

2. Violent; when the candle of life burns not out, but is puft out, and that by the hot breath of a raging Enemy, or the sentencing-mouth of the Magistrate. *Job*'s servants were slain by the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, but not without the *Providence* of God, as *Job* acknowledgeth, chap. 1, 15, 17, 21. *Achan* is stoned to death; and yet glory is due to the Lord whom *Achan* had offended, *Josh.* 7. 19, 25, 26.

3. Casual; which though it may be violent, yet is here considered as not intended by men

men as Agents or Instruments. God's *Providence* reacheth to Chance-medly. The slaying of man accidentally, is said to be God's *delivering a man into the hand of the slayer*: see *Exod.* 21. 13. *Deut.* 19. 5.

Secondly, The timing of the deaths of men, hath its reference to the *Providence* of God: for as he *sets bounds to the sea*, Job 38. 8. and *hath determined the bounds of mens habitations*, Acts 17. 26. so he hath not left the lives of men boundless. The truth of this will appear,

1. From plain places of Scripture affirming so. Job 7. 1. *Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? Are not his days like the days of an hireling?* Job 15. 5. *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.* Eccles. 3. 1, 2. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; a time to be born, and a time to dye.* According here to *Solomon*'s Divinity, time or season for things fall under the *Providence* of God, and particularly, *birth* and *death* are in the front of the catalogue of the instances there: which we are (as one observeth) to understand only according to the event, what things fall out after God's appointment; not the lawfulness or unlawfulness of them, what things should be by God's commandment.

2. From the reason rendered in Scripture, why some are not sooner removed out of the world by the hands of violence, notwithstanding

promissory, or rather comminatory probabilities. John 7.30. *Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.* The same reason is repeated *John* 8. 20. Christ backs the same reason as solid and true, when he said to his apprehenders, *When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour and power of darkness*, Luk. 22. 53.

3. From the verity of God in timing the deaths of persons according to particular predictions. So in *Isa.* 7. 16. *For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.* *Pekah* the son of *Remaliah*, was one of those Kings, and his death is recorded 2 *King.* 15. 30. It is said of the *Assyrian*, Isa. 37. 7. *I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.* Here was a prediction of death, the kind of it, and the place where; and accordingly it was fulfilled, as it is recorded in the 37, 38 verses of the same Chapter.

4. From the peculiar Prerogative of God, as he is (1.) the God of Mercies, and so he hands Mercies to men, 1. by their own deaths, *they are taken away from the evil to come.* God houseth them in Heaven before the black storms fall out on the earth. See 2 *King.* 22. 20. *Isa.* 57. 1. 2. By the deaths of others, who are thorns in the sides of his people; the burning up of these thorns is a joyful bonfire. So in 2 *King.* 13. 22. *Hazael* oppressed *Israel*; in ver. 23. *The Lord was gracious to them, and had compassion on them*, &c. Now how the Lord shews him-

himself thus gracious and compassionate, we have in *v.* 24. *So Hazael the King of Syria died.* Thus the Lord is a God of Mercies even in the deaths of men. But then (2.) as the God of Judgment; and so not only wrath, but great wrath, comes forth on the stage of the World in timing the deaths of persons. The glorious terribleness of Justice is here seen; as (1.) when *Providence* suddenly snatcheth a man from his fancied Paradise; *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*, &c. Luke 12. 20. Death, as *Providence* doth judicially time it, hath a sting in its sting: so in that Monarch, who was slain in his Royal City by his own Sons, and while at his devotions in the House of *Nisroch* his god. *Isa.* 37. 37, 38. (2.) When the deaths of many thousands are timed together: *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth*, Psal. 9. 16. We read of Seventy thousand men who dyed of the Plague in three days time, 2 *Sam.* 24. 15. And in 1 *King.* 20. 29. the children of *Israel* slew of the *Syrians* an hundred thousand foot-men in one day. Now if there were not a *Providence* in the timing the deaths of persons, the glory of Divine Justice would have its grave with the vast multitudes who fall by Famine, Sword, or Pestilence; all which are the Lord's Arrows, as the Prophet *Gad* informeth *David* in 2 *Sam.* 24 12, 13.

5. From the success and non-success of means used in order to the proroguing or lengthning forth of life. The preservatives of life are conservative of it no otherwise than

than as the Lord pleaseth. This may be evidenc'd in three things.

1. In the use of Medicinal means, which sometimes (very improbable to reason), avail to the recovery of health, and that though the person were mortally sick in the judgment of the most accurate Physicians. There seemeth to be something of *Providence* by way of proportion to that Cure wrought on *Hezekiah* by the lump of Figs, as *Isa.* 38. 21. I acknowledg that Cure extraordinary, and shall not dispute the question, Whether the lump of Figs might not have something of natural tendency by way of cure? This is that I contend for, That *Providence* is very much seen, if not in elevating improbable means in themselves considered, in order to a cure; yet in bringing to light such means which are improbable to mans reason, though very proper for the recovery of the Patient, who, like *Epaphroditus*, was sick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him, *Phil.* 2. 27. And as the Lord's mercy, and *Providence* is displayed in the raising of persons from the grave; so no less may the hand of *Providence* be seen in rendering the means us'd for health successless: A Colledg of Physicians are Physicians of no value, when, and where the Lord, the great Physician, withdraws his manutenancy, or succeeding hand of *Providence*: witness this in *Asa*, who had his Physicians, but not his cure, dye he must; his disease lodgeth him in his grave, 2 *Chron.* 16. 12, 13.

But,

But, 2dly, in the matter of Diet; some Creatures have more of a restorative virtue than others; and yet some are healthier, fairer, live longer with their Pulse, than others who eat their portion of the King's meat: *Dan.* 1. 12, 15. Whence is this? the Word doth plainly lesson, *Exod.* 23. 25. *He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from thee.* And Mat. 4. 4. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Lastly, In the greatest caution or circumspection men use to preserve themselves in dangers. The King of *Israel* disguiseth himself, and hath his Armour; yet an Arrow finds its passage between the joynts of his Harness, 1 *King.* 22. On the other hand *Jehosaphat*, who was in the same fight, and in greater danger than King *Ahab*, is preserved: *It came to pass* (saith the Text) *when the Captains of the Chariots saw Jehosaphat* (in his Royal Robes) *that they said, It is the king of Israel, therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehosaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him: and God moved them to depart from him,* 2 Chron. 18. 31.

6thly, and lastly, From the absurdity which would otherwise follow. For if the timing of men's lives here in the world, be not according to the bounds which the Lord sets; then to whom shall the glory in point of preservation be attributed? Shall men think themselves, or acknowledg Fortune, in contradistinction

ction to *Providence*? The Scripture otherwise teacheth, Psal. 31. 15. *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.* And Psal. 68. 20. *He that is our God, is the God of salvation: and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*

In the next place it remains, that some reply be made to the Objections which look, and do but look, the matter here asserted in the face; and they are as followeth.

1. Fifteen years are said to be added to the days of *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 5.

Ans. The addition there is no new Addition, as it respects the Purpose of God; it is rather a new Edition of the Purpose of God; a discovery of what lay hid before, and is now made manifest, notwithstanding the contrary might be concluded in respect of the malignity of *Hezekiah*'s disease. To assert, that there was a new Purpose of God, because of the declaration of the Prophet there, were to make a new God, who is still the Ancient of days, and *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, as the Scripture affirms Him to be, *Dan.* 7. 9. *James* 1. 17.

2. It may be objected, That in *Psal.* 55. 23. *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*

Ans.

Anſ. The days of men are conſidered according to the courſe of nature, *Pſal.* 90. 10. *The days of our years are threeſcore years and ten*, &c. and according to the courſe of *Divine Providence*, which holds an exact accord with the Purpoſe or Determination of God. *I know* (ſaith the Prophet to *Amaziah*) *that God hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkened unto my counſel*, 2 Chron. 25. 16. Men live not then halt their days, according to the probable courſe of Nature, though they dye according to the number of days fore-known or determined by God.

3. It may be objected, That ſome are the cauſe of their own death, and ſo dye before their time, according to what is ſaid, *Eccleſ.* 7. 17. *Why ſhouldſt thou dye before thy time?*

Anſ. 1. The ſame will hold, if it had ſtrength, as to others being the cauſe of the death of others, as the Jews, who killed Chriſt; and yet this horrid fact of theirs was conſiſtent with the ſtated time of Chriſt's Miniſtry on earth, as was before proved, *John* 7.30. *John* 8. 20. *John* 13. 1.

2. However ſome are the cauſe of their own death, yet not without the wiſe *Providence* of God, either as righteouſly puniſhing them, 1 *Sam.* 31. 4 2 *Sam.* 17.23. or graciouſly chaſtizing them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.* So *Joſiah* is in a ſort acceſſory to his own death;

death; and yet he dyes in peace, whilst he dyes in warr: his death was but a sanctified fleabiting in comparison of the evil to come on his Kingdom; he is removed from being a heart-broken Spectator of them, and lives not to be the object of a barbarous and insulting Adversary's reproach and cruelty. See 2 *King.* 22. 20. with 2 *Chron.* 35. and 36. chap.

Now from what hath been said as touching the extent of *Divine Providence* to the death of persons, these four following Consectaries or Lessons may be commended.

1. There is no reason to give way to anxious and disquieting thoughts, from the consideration of difficulties, dangers, casualties, which may attend our selves, or those related to us, in the way or calling in which God by his Providence engageth in according to his word, warranting the way or calling. There is an irregular fear and disquiet, which leaps objectively from the black face of second causes, into the hearts of men and women. Our Saviour intimates so much in *Mat.* 10. 28. the disease there, is Fears about the body; and the cure of this disease, is by going into the Shop of *Divine Providence*, where a remedy may be had, *v.* 29. the sweet and serious meditation on *Divine Providence*, is the best Cordial under all fears and disquiets of this nature. It comes to be the death of fears and

and disquiets which referrs to death. There is a story of an Husbandman and Sea-man communing together: The Husbandman asks the Sea-man, Of what Civil Profession his Father was? He replies, A Sea-man as he was, and so likewise was his Grandfather too. The Husbandman enquires, where his Father died? Answer is made, At Sea, and so did his Grandfather too. Hereupon saith the Husbandman, Are you not afraid to go to Sea? The Sea-man asks the Husbandman, of what Profession was his Father? and after, his Grandfather? and it being answered, They were both Husbandmen; he further asketh, where they died? Answer is made, At home in their beds. And are not you (saith the Sea-man) afraid to go to bed? The application of this story is easie, and needs not a screw.

2. It's wisdom then for persons to interest themselves in the God of *Providence*. *Happy is that people whose God is the Lord*, Psal. 145.15. there are two great encouragements to look after an interest in God, as reconciled to the soul in and through Jesus Christ.

(1.) None go with so strong a guard, as they who have thus *the Lord for their God*. Christ tells his Disciples, that the very hairs of their head were all numbred, *Mat.* 10.30.

(2.) Whatever distresses Saints meet withal, suppose a violent death, they have a counter-poyson or remedy against the evil of the evils.

The

The Lord's *John Baptists* lose their heads, but not an hair; they are then gainers when they seem to be losers. There is enough by death to make amends for death: *Blessed are they which dye in the Lord*, &c. *Rev.*14.13.

3. It may quiet the spirit, when God takes away, by death, Friends, Relations, acquaintants: These dye not at hap-hazzard. The God of Wisdom placeth and displaceth persons in the World, and all wisely and righteously. If Children are with us like *Jonah*'s Gourd, for a night; and then a Worm eats them to a withering. There is no reason to quarrel with the Lord, who hath variety of wise Ends in the Gourd-dispensation of this Nature; We have reason to quarrel with our unreasonable quarrellings at the Lord's bereaving us of Relations. There was never a Marriage, but a Funeral as consequent: And yet doth not the Funeral of Relations usher in the Funerals of quietness and thankfulness to God for the loan of comfortable Relations so long? If one lend us an hundred pounds for some years freely, and after calls for it; Is there ground for disquiet and sullenness, as if so be there had been no courtesie at all for divers years? How often do we forget our selves as men, and much more as Christians, in matters of this nature! The Apostle *Paul* doth caution against irregular sorrow for death

death of persons, 1 *Thess.* 4. 13. and an excellent Copy is left for us to write by, when Death sets its cold hand on any of our friends, 2 *Sam.* 12. 22, 23.

Illud quoque, quâ justitiâ in omnibus rebus es, necesse est te adjuvet, cogitantem, Non injuriam tibi factam, quod talem fratrem amisisti, sed beneficium datum, quod tam diu pietate ejus tibi uti fruique licuit. *Seneca* de consolatione ad *Polybium*.

4. What ground is here for a mortifi'd frame of spirit both to things and persons in the world? Our days, and the days of others, will have their period. We and others are like passengers in a Ship; who, whether they sit, walk on the Decks, or sleep in the Cabins, are in motion towards the Haven. The World is rather an Inn, than an accustomed Home-Stall, or Dwelling-house: one generation passeth away, and another cometh, *Eccles.* 1. 4. It's folly then for the sons of men to be elbow-deep in the thick clay of the world; as if so be they and their wealth, their pomp and their pleasures, were to abide here for ever. Oh that what the Apostle *Paul* adviseth, were engraven on the heart with a pen of Iron, and the point of a Diamond! *But this I say, brethren, The time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30. 31.

SECT. 5.

That the *Providence* of God extendeth to the meaneſt creatures, and things trivial or of leſs moment in human apprehenſion, comes in the laſt place to be inſiſted on; and this appeareth to be ſo from the following Arguments.

1. The Lord made creeping things as well as the Whales and Elephants. This is plain from the Hiſtory of the Creation, as is made manifeſt in *Gen.* 1. 24, 25. Now if the Creation be comprehenſive of things which move in a leſs ſphere of activity; Why ſhould the ſaid things be look't on as below the *Providence* of God in point of gubernation, and ordering them to his own glory?

2. Theſe are a part of the Univerſe, and ſo fall under the *Providence* of God. The little-finger is not excluded from the influence of the Soul, becauſe it is not of equal bigneſs with a limb of the body-natural: if ſo in Man, the little World, as he is termed by ſome; Why ſhould it not hold, by the like parity of reaſon, in the greater World?

3. We find how the Lord hath condeſcended to give informations and directions about

about meaner matters. The Laws given to the Jews have inſtances enough to evidence this; and why ſhould it then be thought beneath *Providence* in governing matters of leſſer conſequence, when Laws have been enacted referring to leſſer matters.

Res erat parva, capellasiniri ab hircis compunctis & maculoſis: veruntamen Deus eò uſq; extendit ſuam Providentiam, monens ea de re *Jacobum* per inſominum *Geneſ.* 31.12. ut *Jacob* diſceret fidere Deo in magnis, videns eum etiam ad hæc minuta curam extendere. *Molinæus* in Enod. grav. quæſt. p. 24.

4. The Scripture hath frequent inſtances of God's *Providence* as verſant about the meaneſt and moſt inconſiderable matters: if we caſt an eye at ſea, there ſhall we find, that the *Providence* of God not only reſpects the *Tarſhiſh*-fleet of ſhips, but alſo a ſingle ſhip, and the broken pieces of that ſhip, *Acts* 27.22. with 24. Not only a ſhoal of fiſh, *Luke* 5. 9. but a ſingle fiſh, *Mat.* 17.27. And if the eye, from its Sea-voyage, return, and walk at Land; there may be ſeen the ſame God in his *Providence* on the ſhore. God's *Providence* reacheth to a Birds-neſt, *Pſal.* 104. 17. and to Birds in the neſt, *Job* 38.4. Whether the proviſion for the young Ravens, ſpoken of in that place of *Job*, be by worms out of the dung in and about their neſts, or by flyes croſſing over the heads of the young ones, which flyes are taken captive, and ſo ſerve for food; I ſhall not largely diſcuſs: it's enough to note, that they are cheriſh'd, and that both ways, as is obſerved by ſome. And not only are the Birds, but Trees, where they neſt, and ſing, within

the verge of *Providence*. So the Fig-tree which our Saviour cursed, *Mat.*21.19. the Sycamore tree on which *Zacheus* climbed up to see Christ, *Luke* 19.4, 5. the Fig-tree under which Christ saw *Nathaniel*, *Joh.*1.48. All these were upon supposition of divine knowledg, so under the secret Law of *Providence*, as that they were not to be cut down, ere such moral references as these Trees had, were accomplish't. Not only Trees, but Houses, (beholding to the Trees for their materials) are subjected to the *Providence* of God: Thus the Winter-house and the Summer-house, the Palace and the Colledg, are liable to the gun-shot of *Providence*, *Amos* 3.15. and 6.11. Yea, to say no more, the *Providence* of God (with reverence be it spoken) stoops so low as to concern it self in the shooes that are in House; the Angel said to *Peter*, *Gird thy self, and bind on thy Sandals*, Acts 12.8.

5. The meanest things considered in their uses, connexions, references, do abundantly testifie the *Providence* of God as extensive to them. *Sampson*'s Feast, and Riddle propounded at the Feast, are introductions to matters of grand weight and importance, *Judg.* 14. The flying of an Arrow in battel is a light thing, yet this kills a King, and so the whole Army is routed, 1 *King.* 22. In our English History it is recorded of *Richard* the first, how a Castle was offered him, if he would save the lives of the besieged: He would not, but threatned to hang them: Hereupon an *Arbalister* charged his Bow, and with a squire

Speed's History of *Britain*.

Arrow

Arrow; making first his prayer to God, That he would direct that shot, and deliver the innocency of the besieged from oppression, it struck the King, whereof he dyed.

Mention is made likewise, how the life of *Edward* the second, hung on the doubtful answer of *Travistone* not being pointed: *Edvardum occidere nolite timere bonum est*, To kill King *Edward* you need not to fear it is good. If the stop be plac'd at [*not*], its sense is different from the stop being set at the word [*fear*]. Loyalty and Treason in this *point*, are at a point. I might give other instances; as in a person's stooping down to tye the shooe, and upon a sudden alteration of the posture, an Horse at that nick of time comes by, is frighted, throws the party on Horseback before; and what is consequent upon falls oftentimes, most know—— I have known the life of a Child to be preserved by means of a thwart or bending stick, which hath check't a board of weight from so falling down directly, as otherwise the Child might have perisht. And not only in matters of this life have smaller matters their connexions and references; but also in matters of Religion. Thus that man's bearing a Pitcher of water, *Luke* 22. 10. What is (saith a learned man *) of less moment, than for a man to bear a Pitcher of water? What is a Pitcher of water to God's *Providence*? Yes, God guided it to a good end to the Disciples; shewing

Antistitis præclariindustria ad custodes captivi Principis literæ componuntur in hæc verba, *Edvardum occidere*, &c. Advertite amphiboliam; si iste modo legantur hæc verba—— eædem prohibent: si verò sic—— jubent. *Godw.* de præsul. *Angl.* p. 283.

Dr. *Holdsworth* in Ser. 2. on *Luke* 22. 11, 12 [if that may pass for the Doctor's with the others.]

ing them hereby, where they might eat the Passover.

6. If God's *Providence* should be deni'd to smaller matters; then,

1. Might it not as well be deni'd to greater matters? For smaller matters, considered in their connexions, become greater matters. Who knows what are the notable products, it may be, of things, little heeded by some for the present season? Besides, a fair way is laid open to deny God's *Providence* in greater matters; which become not so great circumstantially considered, as was before intimated. *Austin* tells a story, how when one had said, That the Fly was made by the Devil; a certain *Manichee* insinuates, That then by the same Devil is made the Bee, Locust, Lizzard, Oxe, Elephant, and so Man---. Knock off *Providence* in lesser matters, and a way is laid open for one to play the *Manichee* in greater.

But 2*dly*, To deny God's *Providence* in lesser matters, is to break that series or chain whereby Divine Wisdom hath ordered all. As in the workmanship of the Tabernacle, there were Loops and Taches, and these had their use; and without these, What would become of the Tabernacle? So here, *Providence* takes in a Loop, a Tach, as well as the Purple, Blew, and Scarlet, of greater matters.

Omnia gubernare, est Deo gloriosum.

3. To deny God's *Providence* in lesser matters, were to derogate from the glory of God, (1.) More generally, seeing its glorious for God to have all at his check and controll.

(2.) More

(2.) More particularly, seeing his glory doth notably shine forth in and about smaller matters, as was in the Miracle of the Lice, that the Magicians cry out, *This is the finger of God*, *Exod.* 8. 19. No work indeed so little, but if look't into, bespeaks a great God. Nullum est tam minutum Dei opus, quod non in se contineat aliquid miraculi, ubi repuratur sicut decet. *Calv.* in *Zach.* c. 8. v. 6.

Now from what hath been said, I may briefly commend two things, seeing more may be said of this nature in the following part of this Treatise.

1. There is no reason to judg the care of meaner matters as without the circle of *Divine Providence*. It's enough that our Saviour Christ hath decided the controversie to an hair, and the natural colour of an hair, *Mat.* 10.30. with *Mat.* 5. 36. if this satisfie not persons, I know not how to satisfie them. If they knew what it were to *Providence* it over the meanest of creatures but for one moment, they would see reason sufficient to acknowledg the Creator in all; and that as they cannot make a Fly, so not providentially hold it up in its beeing, and govern it. Si tamen aliquis existimet istiusmodi (scilic. parvarum) gubernationem parum convenire Majestati Dei is faciat periculum in re abjectissimâ, num forte possit illam ita regere, ut ipsi sit ad nutum, & ab ipso pendeat in omnibus, quæ ad curam & gubernationem creaturæ pertinent. Fatebitur ille profecto, se in rei vilissimæ gubernatione talia observare, quæ longe sint majora, quam ut ab homine, imo ab hominibus in unum conflatis præstari queant. *Alsted.* Theol. Cas. c. 5.

Non se subducit Deus, ut cadas; sed & de ipsis capillis nostris securitatem nobis dedit;

2. There is the more hand-fast for faith to lay hold on God for greater matters, seeing his *Providence* is verſant about ſmaller. Thus Chriſt teacheth, *Mat.* 6. and ſo *Mat.* 10. 30, 31. And ſo I have done with the Third Part of this Treatiſe: The Fourth now is to be proſecuted.

quid times hominem homo in ſinu Dei poſitus? jacta in Deum curam tuam. *Auguſt.* Ser. 6. in *Mat.*

PART

Part IV.

HAVING thus far launched into the Sea of *Providence*, where the Christian may behold the wondrous works of God: Come we now to give a recital of the Sacred Maxims or Observations which this Voyage will afford. And here I shall,

1. Prefix the Observation.

2. Affix the Illustration or Confirmation; together with the Accommodation or Improvement of the Observation illustrated or confirmed.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION I.

The knowledg men have of the Providence *of God, is imperfectly apprehensive, not comprehensive.*

CHAP. I.

THE truth of this appears, (1.) From positive assertions in Scripture, Eccles. 3.11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their hearts, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.* (2.) From the Lord's posing parties about his *Providence:* When he takes the matter in hand, as in the case of *Job*, How did the Lord argue him into a modest silence? See chap. 38, 39, 40, 41. with chap. 42. *v.* 1,2,3,4,5,6. (3.) From errors and mistakes about God's *Providence*, which have more or less seized on not only men, but the best of men. *Job*'s Friends were no Atheists, but good men; yet saith the Lord unto *Eliphaz* the *Temanite*, *My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath*, Job 42.7. (4.) From the ingenuous confessions or bemoaning acknowledgments of godly ones. *Lo* (saith *Job*) *these are the parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him!* Job 26. 14. *So foolish*

foolish was I (saith the *Psalmist*) *and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee*, Psal. 73. 22. *Surely I am* (saith *Agur*) *more brutish than any man; and have not the understanding of a man: I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledg of the Holy: Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name? Or what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?* Prov. 30. 2, 3, 4.

Moreover, the truth of this will further be evidenced, if we consider,

1. The Object, *viz.* Providential dispensations.

2. The Subject, Man under this or that dispensation.

To begin with the first of these. The Scripture doth inform how that the Lord is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*, Isa. 28. 19. and *he only doth wondrous things*, Psal. 72. 18. Look as what comes out of Heaven's shop, bespeaks the skill of the great Workman of Heaven and Earth; so there are some divine pieces of Workmanship (if I may so speak after the manner of men) which hold men at an amazing or astonishing-gaze. More particularly: Two things in Divine dispensations of *Providence* do notably gravel the sons of men. (1.) The unusualness of a Dispensation. *Rebeccah*'s Warr in her bowels makes her say, *If it be so, why am I thus? and she went to enquire of the Lord*, Gen. 25. 22. *Job*'s afflictions in such sort,

and

and befalling such an one who keeps up communion with God; yea, prays for his Children, left in their regular solace of themselves together, they should be irregular; must in all likelihood startle himself and his friends, who probably observing how God did then ordinarily bless the Tabernacle of the righteous in regard of outward prosperity, were the sooner induced to pass wrong censure on that holy man of God. But in the next place, The intricacy of a Dispensation doth likewise contribute to the non-plussing or baffling of a party under the Dispensation. We read in *Ezek.* 1. 16. of *a wheel within a wheel:* Whether that be to be understood inclusively, as one wheel within being out of ken, and so there is a secret winding of matters which the eye of reason discerneth not: or, whether in a transverse sense; and so it notes the thwart or cross-turnings of things, when one while matters go this way, and another while that way, I determine not: either of the interpretations give us the thing here contended for. To this we may add some exemplifications of the intricacy of *Providence.* That in *Judg.* 20. where the children of *Israel* had a good Cause and a Divine Warrant to fight *Benjamin*; and yet they were worsted and put to the rout. *Jacob* had warrant to return to his Country; a promise that God would deal well with him in that return, *Gen.* 32. 9. and yet behold a *Providence* which seemingly clashed with the Promise! Is this (might Reason be ready enough to prompt *Jacob* in the

the ear) to be dealt well with? What! to have thy throat cut by *Esau*'s Ruffians! Here is a returning to thy Kindred indeed, by returning to thy duſt! And yet *Jacob*'s black cloud blows over, and the Promiſe and the *Providence* do more ſweetly kiſs each other than the two Brethren do.

In the next place conſider, conſider the Subject; and ſo man is not much unlike *Seneca*'s *Harpeſten*, who complained the room was dark, when ſhe was blind. The light of *Providence* is not ſo taken in; partly, by reaſon of darkneſs in the underſtanding; for, *we know but in part*, 1 Cor. 13. 9. and partly, by reaſon of turbulent paſſions; which being croſſed in this or that diſpenſation, do raiſe a fog or miſt, which cloud the underſtanding. How is *David* tranſported on the death of *Abſalom*! 2 *Sam.* 18. 33. How doth *Jonah*'s pride and paſſion hinder him from ſubſcribing to the Wiſdom and Mercy of God in ſparing *Nineveh*! ſee *Jonah* chap. 4. Men had need therefore watch againſt charming luſts and paſſions, which otherwiſe will joyn their additional iſſue with the intrinſick darkneſs of the underſtanding; and ſo, like the Earth, interpoſe between them and the light of *Providence*.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. NO ground to throw by the observation of the Lord's Dispensations, because our knowledg of them is not a comprehensive knowledg. It is a dangerous inference from that of *Peter* speaking of *Paul*'s Epistles, in which are some things hard to be understood, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. to reject therefore the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. The like inference here from the things hard to be understood in the course of God's *Providence*, is of dangerous consequence. What is said of the Scriptures, how *it is a River wherein the Elephant may swim, and yet the Lamb may wade*; the same, by way of proportion, may be said as touching the Lord's Providential Dispensations; some of which, gravel the profoundest; others are understood by the meanest for their instruction. *Haman*'s Counsellors, and his Wife *Zeresh*, learn't a cautionary lesson in the School of *Providence*, they bid him beware how he engage against a *Mordecai*, a Child of *Providence*: *Esth.* 6. 13. The Apostle *Paul* informeth, how there is a common Catechism of *Providence* for the World, *Rom.* 1. 20. Moreover, it may be well remembred here, That some Dispensations of *Providence* which are dark for a time, may after become light to the industrious and waiting Christian on his God. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the Sanctuary of God;*

God; then understood I their end, Psal. 73. 16, 17. Lastly, Such mysteries and riddles of *Providence*, the depth whereof we are not able to fathom; yet by the light of God's word we are taught to subscribe unto, and to rest contented, by way of admiration, where we cannot reach by way of comprehension; *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*, Mat. 11. 26.

2. No reason for any mortal man to pride himself in his attainments. Though a man be got up on the Mountain of *Providence*, and others are in the Valley, yet that man is far enough from touching the sky. Two things may check pride upon the account of knowledg here. (1.) The Angels in Heaven may learn by the *Providences* of God on earth. That Heavenly Academy admits of an addition of experimental knowledg; see *Eph.* 3. 10. 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. No man therefore knows so much, but he may know more; and to be lifted up with high apprehension of man's apprehensions, is so far from being wise as an Angel of God, as that the man lies open to the condemnation of the Devil, as the Apostle teacheth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. But (*2dly*) he who hath an high conceit about his knowledg in Divine Dispensations, may quickly be mistaken in matters, and pay deer for his mistake. We find how a good Prophet, by a pretended *Providence* of an Angel's appearing, is prevail'd on to do otherwise than he should have done, and that to the loss of his life, 1 *King.* 13. 18, 24. Though a man therefore have

have made more progress in the search of *Word* and *Providence*, than others; yet let him remember, his knowledg is rather a twi-light-one, than Meridian; and let him, according to that in Psal. 2. 11. *serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling.*

3. From this, learn to bid an hearty welcome to such means, helps, furtherances, as God vouchsafeth for the better understanding of his dispensations. This inference is rational from the premised Theses or Positions. The Cripple needs his Crutches, and no reason to throw them away till he can go without them. There are two moving Considerations here:

1. It is dis-ingenuous to do otherwise. Shall God offer thee Spectacles for thy weak sight, and wilt thou throw them against the wall, or trample them under thy feet? It was the aggravating sin of the Gentiles, That they did imprison the notions of *Providence*, which God had sent as guests into their hearts: They *held the truth in unrighteousness*, saith *Paul*, *Rom.* 1. 18. *Pharaoh* had *Moses* and *Aaron*, together with Catechising-Plagues; and yet he continues as block-headed a King as ever sate upon *Egypt*'s Throne; and just it was with God, that such a Block should float on the waters, where *Israel* saw the great work which the Lord did upon him and his *Egyptians*, *Exod.* 14. 31.

2. Herein is a display of Wisdom, To use kindly these Guests, I mean Helps and

Further-

Furtherances for the better taking in of the mind of God in his Diſpenſations. *Abraham* was no loſer by entertaing the Angels as his Gueſts. He learnt that in their company, which otherwiſe he had been ignorant of, *Gen.* 18. 17. It's wiſdom then to ſet open the window-leaves for Heaven's light to come in on our Underſtandings. *Whoſo is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things; prudent, and he ſhall know them: for the ways of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them,* Hoſ. 14. 9.

OBSERVATION II.

Gods Decree, Will, or Purpose, is the original bottom, or foundation, of his Dispensations in the world.

CHAP. I.

THE truth of this may be cleared on this wise:

1. There are Allusions or Similitudes in Scripture, which according to their proper scope and drift, declare this. In *Psal.* 139. 16. *In thy book all my members were written.* Jer. 18. 4. *So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the Potter to make it.* And in *Zech.* 6. 1. the Chariots there come out from between two Mountains. This Text is a picture of the process of *Providence.* Things before they come to pass, are latent between these Mountains, as *Calvin* interpreteth.

Et hic aptissime nobis pingitur consilium Dei quoniam antequam res in actum erumpant, sunt quasi inclusæ inter montium angustias: quod enim Deus decrevit, non apparet, sed est absconditum, quasi lateret in altis montibus. Tunc ergo incipimus agnoscere Dei consilium, ubi ipsa experientia nos docet hoc vel alio modo fuisse decretum quod prius nos latebat.

2. Matters in Scripture are insisted on, as having a reference to God's Decree or Will.

(1.) Some

(1.) Some things are referred to God by way of proper efficiency. *Paul* ſpeaks of *veſſels of mercy which the Lord had afore prepared unto glory*, Rom. 9. ver. 23. What this preparing of the Lord is, the ſame Apoſtle doth give to underſtand, not only in that Chapter, but elſewhere, as Eph. 1. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame, before him in love; having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jeſus Chriſt, according to the good pleaſure of his will*, v. 4, 5. and not only good ſupernatural, as Vocation, Juſtification, and the like, center in the Purpoſe or Will of God, as the Apoſtle here ſheweth: but likewiſe, good natural and moral; for *he hath made a decree for the rain*, Job 28. 26. *The fire and hail, ſnow and vapours, ſtormy wind, fulfil his word*, Pſal. 148. 8. *Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights*, James 1. 17. (2.) Other matters have a reference to the Decree or Will of God, by way of a wiſe, righteous permiſſion. It may be obſerved how the Apoſtle ſpeaks differently of the veſſels of mercy, and the veſſels of wrath, *Rom.* 9. the veſſels of mercy the Lord is ſaid to prepare unto glory, *v.* 23. the veſſels of wrath, are ſaid only to be fitted to deſtruction, *v.* 22. God infuſeth no evil into them; and yet the evil of ſin cannot be without his Will ſo permitting; not by way of approbation, but phyſical non-impedition. There is indeed a curious and ſpotleſs artifice of the Holy One of *Iſrael*, even in and

about the sins of men. He never acts deficiently from the Rule of his Eternal Righteousness; and therefore the Lord's Willing sin in a sense, is not to be ignorantly jumbled together with man's not-hindering, who is under a Law to hinder it. I see no reason then to deny the reference that sin hath to the Will or Purpose of God. The hand of *Providence* writ the Copy of Eternal Love in Christ's Sufferings; the Pen had its hair, and that its blot, a very great and black one; and yet what saith *Peter*? Acts 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledg of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.* Add to this, that in *Acts* 4. 27,28. which seems to be a full and clear confession of the Church in this point.

Nec dubitandum est, Deum facere bene, etiam sinendo fieri quæcunque male: non enim hoc nisi justo judicio sinit, & profecto bonum est omne quod justum est: nam nisi hoc esset bonum, ut essent & mala, nullo modo esse sinerentur ab Omnipotente Bono, cui procul dubio, quam facile est, quod vult, facere, tam facile est, quod non vult esse, non sinere. *August.* in Enchirid. cap. 96.

3. Matters are insisted on in Scripture, not only by way of meer Reference, but also by way of Inference, from the Purpose or Will of God as declared. An instance full for this, is, the not breaking the legs of Christ, *John* 19. 33, 36. The Apostle *Paul* doth also infer *calling*, &c. from *predestination*, Rom. 8. 30. yea, he doth infer a patient bearing of afflictive dispensations, on this wise, saying, that *no man should be moved by these afflictions; for*

your

your ſelves know, that we are appointed thereunto, 1 Theſ. 3. 3.

4. Inſtruments, in their actings, have a ſubſerviency to the Purpoſe or Will of God. In *Ezekiel*'s viſion, the wheels are mov'd by the living creatures; they go whither the Spirit was to go, *Ezek.* 1. 12. And not only Inſtruments miniſterial, who act knowingly and regularly; but others, who intend no conformity to the Will or Purpoſe of God in matters brought to paſs, do yet pay a kind of tribute to the Lord's Will; as in the ſelling of *Joſeph* into *Egypt*, and the crucifying of Chriſt, *Gen.* 50. 20. *Acts* 4. 27, 28.

5. If the Lord's Will be not the foundation of Diſpenſations, then ſomething elſe muſt take place; and if men, as the nobleſt of creatures here below, ſhall have the Chair of State, then to ſacrifice to their own net, and to burn incenſe unto their drag, will be found good divinity, which the Prophet cenſures as bad, *Hab.* 1. 16. But Chriſtians have not ſo learned Chriſt; for he teacheth to reſolve their mercies ultimately into the good pleaſure of God, *Mat.* 11. 25, 26.

6. The Scripture doth plainly aſſert this truth, *Pſal.* 115. 3. *But our God is in the heavens, he doth whatſoever he pleaſeth.* Iſa. 46. 10. *My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will fulfil all my pleaſure.* Dan. 4. 29. *This is the interpretation, O King; and this is the decree of the Moſt High, which is come upon my Lord the King.* Mat. 10. 29. *Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall to the*

ground without your father. Eph. 1. 11. *Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

CHAP. II.

1. BE the more confirmed in the truth of this Observation. Look not on the Will or Purpose of God as a Plant of Time, but as the Eternal Root of what comes to pass in Time. And good reason is there so to do; for, (1.) The Scripture carries the Purpose of God with respect to matters beyond their present existencies in the world, *Jer.* 1. 5. *Mat.* 25. 34. *Rom.* 9. 11. (2.) The glorious Attributes of God speak another language than so, as if he were not resolved on the government of the world, till things have their existencies: for, (1.) He is *Omniscient* from all eternity: He knows matters before they exist, or have an actual being, *Psal.* 139. 2. *Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.* Acts 15. 18. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.* (2.) He is *Omnipotent*; nothing resisteth his will. *He spake, and it was done*, Psal. 33. 9. *Power belongeth to him*, Psal. 62. 10. (3.) He is *Independent* in his operations: He lacquies not after the Creatures; none of the Creatures give to him, so that a new Purpose hereupon is originally framed, which was not before, although not declared. God is no such debtor to any of the Creatures. Find out

out the Creature to whom God is such a debtor, and the debt shall be well paid, *Rom.* 11.35. (4.) He is *Unchangeable*; there is not the least change in Him. He is not a yesterday God purposing, and to day a God not purposing; and to morrow a God purposing; or on the contrary, a yesterday not purposing, and to day purposing, and to morrow not purposing: no, no; *He is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13.8. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, Rom. 11.19. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever: the thoughts of his heart to all generations*, Psal. 33.11.

2. Look not on man's [*I will*] so, as to forget that God's Will or Purpose must take place. How many live as if Men were God, and God but Man! The Lord takes notice of this, and rebukes for it, in Isa. 50.12. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of man, that shall dye; and the son of man, which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker*, &c. There are two things worthy of the Christian's meditation here: (1.) That man's [*I will*] without God's [*I will*], is but a *sounding brass or tinkling cymbal*. It makes a noise in the ear of sense and reason, and it's but a noise. Men's Decrees prove often smoak and bubbles. The enemy said,

Scito autem homo, nullum tibi adversari potuisse, nisi Deus potestatem dedisset, nec potestatem habuisset in te adversarius, nisi permitteret Deus. Universa, quæ accidunt tibi, absq; Dei non veniunt voluntate. Iniquorum potestas super te, ex Dei datur licentiâ: qui tibi adversantur, Dei faciunt consilium. Isidor. Hispal. lib.1. Soliloq.

said, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, mine hand shall destroy them*, Exod. 15. 9. Here is earth's [*I will*] upon [*I will*]: But what is Heaven's [*I will*]? That we have in the next verse, *Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters.* (2.) That though man's [*I will*] may be co-incident in part with God's [*I will*] in regard of afflicting the Lord's people; yet God intends otherwise than man, who is his rod, and is after thrown into the fire. A full place for this, is that in *Isa.* 10. 5, 6, 7.

3. Rush not into sin, nor plead for it upon a pretence of the Divine Will or Decree. Shall *Adam* plead thus with the Lord, If thou hadst not decreed to make the woman, and accordingly to give her to me to wife, I had not had forbidden fruit from her; 'twas *the woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*, Gen. 3. 12. *Adam* might blame himself; the Lord had forbidden him to eat; that Law of Prohibition was a Rule, according to that in *Deut.* 29. 29. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.* Look then to what God lays forth before thee by way of duty: say not as the Heathen Servant to his Master, in excuse of his fact, *That the gods had decreed he should do so*: To whom the Master replied, *That*

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the gods had likewise decreed he should be beaten for so doing.

4. Learn from hence, thou whose Bucket hath gone down into the Well of God's Eternal Love in Christ;

1. To view thy spiritual mercies in the Spring-head of them: so doth *Paul*, *Gal.* 1. 16. *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me*——. Christ teacheth to eye the *Father's good pleasure in giving a kingdom*, Luke 12. 32.

2. To rejoyce in the Lord, seeing his Purpose, as declared, bodes good to godly ones, according to that of the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Observe here; it is not said, To them who are purposed as they are called; as if the Election did lacquy after a Calling, which may vanish after, and that sort of Election with it: such a gloss is to make *Paul*'s Cordial here to become a venomous Potion.

3. To be watchful against sin: *For God hath chosen us* (saith the Apostle) *in him, that we should be holy*, Eph. 1. 4. And where sin is indulged, there smart will be ushered in. Who knows what black dispensations of affliction are wrapt up in the Lord's Purpose, for Children who play the wanton! Though the Lambs are not thrown into

into the mouth of the roaring Lion of Hell; yet there are Dogs, that may not only bark, but bite them: *Eli*, *David*, *Hezekiah*, are lamentable instances for this. See chap. 3, 4, of the first Book of *Samuel*; and 2 *Sam.* 12. and *Isa.* 39.

4. To calm and quiet the heart from the meditation of the Purpose of God; besides which, or contrary to which, men and devils can do nothing. Hence is that glorious triumphancy of the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39.

Quin si viderimus fractum ruere orbem cum omnibus elementis, & imminere cervicibus nostris; tamen diceremus, etiam ruendo non rues, nisi Deus velit, etsi capiti incumberet, nihil nocebis, nec opprimes me diceremus, aut si sic visum est Deo, ut obruar mole tuâ: fiat sane quod bonum est in oculis Domini. *Luth.*

OBSER-

OBSERVATION III.

The Lord's Will is not only the ground why things are, but why they are not.

CHAP. I.

THE truth of this appears: For,

1. There is a ſufficiency of Power to bring about what is not, and may never be; and what is not, and yet may be, when the Lord ſhall ſee it good to be, and after this or that ſort to be. The Lord is deſcribed in Scripture as the great Potter of the world, *Iſa.* 45 9. *Rom.* 9. 21. and ſo he hath a liberty for poſſible veſſels, not to be; and for ſuch veſſels as are intentionally to be, not to be of this faſhion or ſhape, of ſuch a bigneſs, and not to be at ſuch a time, but when he pleaſeth. The Apoſtle *Paul* hath well ſtated this point, Why all fleſh is not the ſame fleſh; Why one Starr hath not the like glory for degree that another hath; Why the grain ſown thrives; and ſo conſequently, why when it thrives not; He reſolves all into the good will of God, as that paſſage of his imports; *but God giveth it a body as it hath pleaſed him,* 1 Cor. 15. 38. The *Baptiſt* tells the Phariſees and

and Sadduces, That God is able of the stones present before their eyes, to raise up children unto *Abraham*, *Mat.* 3. 5. Why the stones are not multiplied into children unto *Abraham*, is from the Lord's will: the *Israelites* they had Manna in the wilderness, which neither they nor their fathers knew before, as *Moses* saith, *Deut.* 8. 3. and whence is this, but from the Lord's will, not to give it in *Egypt?*

2. The reason rendred in Scripture, why things are not, is plain and positive, if an eye be had to the Lord's Dominionship. Thus in 2 *Chron.* 15. where it is said, *Then was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in*, &c. *v.* 5. And how so? *for God did vex them with all adversity*, v. 6. Like unto this, is that in *Jer.* 47. 6, 7. *O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thy self into thy scabbard, rest and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon and the sea-shore? there hath he appointed it.* The Lord could, if he had pleased, have given to the people existent in those black times, better hearts, and so they had had better times; or might have vouchsafed fat times of prosperity and plenty, and so they might be spiritually punisht with blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. That therefore there is no peace, the sword is not still and quiet, is from the Lord, though sin doth intervene as the procuring-cause of such sad dispensations.

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3. The verity or faithfulneſs of God is concerned herein, why things are not, as well as why they are. There are predictions which reach the denial of this or that to be. *All fleſh ſhall not be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither ſhall there any more be flood to deſtroy the earth*, ſpake the Lord to *Noah*, Gen. 9. 11. No ſucceſs for an *Ahab* at *Ramoth-Gilead*, 1 King. 21. 28. *Shall he proſper, ſhall he eſcape that doth ſuch things? or ſhall he break the Covenant, and be delivered?* Ezek. 17. 15. So not a bone of Chriſt to be broken, becauſe the Scripture ſo fore-told. *John* 19. 36. So *Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many*, Heb. 9. 28.

4. There is a rich Treaſure-houſe of Mercy in this ſeemingly empty houſe of *Things not to be*. It's not beyond infinite Power, and affronted Juſtice, and contriving Wiſdom, to elevate the moſt ſmarting troubles that are in the world, above what they are. The Lord knows how to find out new ones, and to put more teeth, and ſharper ones, into the old ones. Yea, the worm that dieth not, and the fire that goeth not out, can be made to bite deeper, and burn fiercer. Not only is there mercy in the non-conſtitution of new ſmarts, or heightning old ones; but in keeping off ſuch ſmarts for the kind of them, as others are made the ſubject of. That Judgments which have an exiſtence, have not a reſpective exiſtence to thee, is from the Lord's mercy. *Moſes* notes this in his ſpeech to the *Iſraelites*, Deut. 7. 15. *And the Lord will take away from*

from thee all ſickneſs, and will put none of the evil diſeaſes of Egypt (which thou knoweſt) upon thee, but will lay them upon all that hate thee.

5. The Prayers of Saints do objectively reſpect things which are not, but to be; and things which are, but not to be. So *Daniel* prays for the releaſe from the captivity: *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy ſervant, and his ſupplications, and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy ſanctuary that is deſolate, for the Lords ſake*, Dan. 9. 17. ſee more *Pſal.* 51. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *Rev.* 6. 10.

6. If God hath not the Negative voice, who hath? Find him out truly, that we may come and worſhip him: *But who is he that ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not?* Lam. 3. 37. To deny the Lord's Prerogative in Negatives, is to pull the Crown from his head, or to make him a God of the Hills, not of the Plains; becauſe victory is not in the Plains, he hath nothing to do there, he may get him gone to the Hills, and there be poſitive in his actings: But away with this *Syrian* language, 1 *King.* 20. 23.

CHAP. II.

1. CHARGE not the Lord fooliſhly with want of power, when things are not thus and thus brought to paſs. *Thinkeſt thou (ſaith Chriſt to Peter) that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than*

than twelve legions of angels? but how then ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be? Mat. 26. 53, 54.

2. Look more to God, and leſs to the Creatures, when they give not down their Milk. If there be a lock ſet upon their virtues, forces, operations, remember in whoſe hand the key is. If ſome, who ſhould be, and ſometimes have been *Melchizedecks*, bringers forth of bread and wine for refreſhment, *Gen.* 14. 18. become *Nabals*, hide-bound ones, and inſulting-ones, 1 *Sam.* 25. 10, 11, 12. be not ſtartled at it; eye God in all: their hearts are hardned to ſoften thine; their ears are ſhut, that ſo thy mouth may be the more opened to pour out thy prayer at a Throne of Grace to God, who hath wiſe ends in ſuch a Diſpenſation. Be humbled then for ſin before the Lord, who hath all the Creatures at his beck, and at whoſe girdle hang all the keys for unlocking any Creature whatſoever: ſee *Iſa.* 59. 1, 2.

3. Bleſs God for Negative Mercies. If the Lord were not the cauſe why things are not, what had been your caſe in regard of miſeries? All the temporal evils inflicted on others, are *Memorandums* for thy thankfulneſs. The Lord's withholding Satan from falling in on thee with this or that temptation, at ſuch a nick of time, doth call for thy acknowledgment. There is, beſides a with-holding *Providence*, a limiting one, when Satan is let looſe, as in *Job* his caſe: All this may leſſon to ſay as *David*, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul*, Pſal. 104. 1.

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That Psalm is a Meditation on the *Providence* of God; and the *Psalmist* there observeth the *Providence* of God in Negatives. There are four observables there. (1.) Why things are, and consequently are not, in regard of their continued beeings: for if God with-hold his influences, the Creatures are *a nigrum nihil*, an empty nothing: this in v. 30. *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.* (2.) Why things are not, in regard of their operations. The Water is a fluid body, and would quickly diffuse it self: And why not? *Thou hast set a bound, that they* (the Waters) *may not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the earth*, v. 9. (3.) Why things are not in such a conjunction. The beasts of prey are not ordinarily abroad when man is: this in v. 22, 23. *the Sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens: man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.* (4.) VVhy things are no longer in regard of duration or time for their existencies. This we have in v. 29. *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they dye and return to their dust.*

OBSER-

OBSERVATION IV.

There is a wise Platform of things drawn forth by God: or, The administration of things in the World, is according to the Draught of Divine Wisdom.

CHAP. I.

THAT there is an intermixture of Wisdom in the Dispensations of the Lord, the *Psalmist* doth solemnly profess, saying, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches*; Psal. 104. 24. This will more fully appear, if we consider three things:

1. Whose Platform it is.
2. How it is described in Scripture.
3. With what it may be compared.

1. Every thing, so far as it comes from God, hath an Excellency stampt on it; and if a beam of the Sun be glorious, what is the Sun it self? God being then wise, *Job* 9.4. yea, only wise, *Jude* 25. his management of matters in the world hath an harmony with the Ideal draught of his Wisdom.

2. Observe how *Paul* describeth God's *working of all things*, Eph. 1. 11. it is *after the counsel of his own will.* There are two observables in this Text: (1.) The term [*counsel*]; which as it implies some defect in the creature, as not seeing by and by into

the bottom of a business; and so there is deliberation; so it is not applicable to God, but as it notes the height or top of rational contrivement; and so, after the manner of men, it is accommodated to God for our better understanding. *Counsel*, in this sense, is nothing else but the result of Wisdom and Understanding (as a learned man observeth): and when attributed to God, it notes his glorious Perfection in ordering all things, according to that in *Job* 12. 16. *With him is wisdom and strength, he hath understanding.*

Sapientia est virtus, quâ celeri & expedito animi motu & ratiocinatione res alioqui amplas & magnas complectimur. Intelligentia ea virtus, qua longo rerum usu & experientia edocti de futurorum successu decernimus. Consilium est animi designatio ex duabus illis virtutibus prognata. *Cartwright* in *Prov. Sal.*

(2.) The other thing in the Apostle's description, is, the order or disposition of the words; it is not said, *He worketh all things according to the will of his counsel*; as if so be the Lord did first consult, advise, and so a Will did follow, as in human affairs: but, *he worketh all things according to the counsel of his will*; to note (as one observeth on the place) that the Lord's Will is his Councellor: That includes Wisdom, Holiness, rectitude, and is the Rule of all Righteousness and Wisdom.

At vero aliquid facere ex solo consilio voluntatis, ubi voluntas in obliquo casu consilio subjungitur, denotat solam ejus voluntatem qui ita aliquid operatur, ipso consilii loco assumpto, consilii vicem præbere: adeo ut illi consultare vel deliberare de re aliquâ, nihil sit aliud, quam solum velle: quippe quod ejus sola voluntas omnem in se sapientiam, sanctitatem, justitiam & rectitudinem includens, justitiæ omnis atq; sapientiæ sit regula, &c. *Eodem.*

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3. Compare the Wisdom of God with the wisest: Go to the Angels of Heaven, who are the wisest of creatures; as that in 2 *Sam.* 14. 20. *My Lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an Angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth*, doth import: Yet what are Angels in comparison of God! How quickly doth their Mountain of Wisdom vanish into a Mole-hill, their Wisdom into Folly, before the All-wise God! So it is said *Job* 4. 18. *And his Angels he charged with folly.* Their line cannot reach the bottom of Divine Wisdom in the mystery of Redemption; they are at a gaze with the Plot of the manifold Wisdom of God, as the Apostle intimates in *Eph.* 3. 10.

CHAP. II.

1. CENSURE not the All-wise God for misgovernment of the World. He rules wisely, whatever Sense and Reason do object to the contrary. *Wisdom and might are his*, Dan. 2. 20. Instead of shooting the fool's bolt, acknowledg thine own folly. *Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild asse's colt*, Job 11. 12. Here is an Asse, a wild Asse, and the Colt of the wild Asse; all which may abase man, and give a check to his controlling-thoughts of the Lord's Dispensations.

Thesaurus explic. de Deo. *Luther* hath a very pertinent passage, which here may be inserted. "I (saith he) have often essayed to prescribe certain Instructions "to God, which he should follow in the administration of the Church and other Affairs: O Lord, I said, I would have this so "done, in this order, and with such success, "&c. But God did contrary to that which "I did petition for. Then I began to muse, "Surely my counsel is not disagreeing from "the Glory of God, but makes very much "for the sanctifying of thy Name, the gathering and encreasing of thy Kingdom, "the spreading of the knowledg of the word; "briefly, it was most beautiful, and excellently "thus thought on: *Sed risit haud dubiè Dominus hanc sapientiam*; But God did without "doubt laugh at this wisdom, and said, Go "to, I know thee to be prudent and learned; "but this is never my manner, that either "*Peter*, or Doctor *Martin*, or any other, should "teach, frame, govern, lead me. I am not a "passive God, but active; who am wont to "lead, rule, and fashion, as I please.

2. Submit to his Dispensations, though afflictive. When God puts Wormwood into thy Cup, beware of disgorging thy Gall. Be silent when *Providence* makes a noise. *Aaron* held his peace, when God did wage warr from Heaven against his two sons, *Levit.* 10. 3. Thou art taught to say, *Thy will be done*, Mat. 6. 10. that not only respecteth the *Will* of his Precept, as to obey in what he commandeth;

but

but likewiſe the *Will* of God declared in his *Providence*; And ſo it is [*thy will be done*] by way of ſubmiſſion, in oppoſition to impatiency and murmuring.

Quicquid enim fit in toto mundo & in Eccleſia, quicquid nobis accidit, certum eſt non fieri ſine voluntate Dei, *Mat.* 10. 29. vel operante, vel permittente. Quia vero illam Dei voluntatem, vel diſputando non probamus, vel per impatientiam de ea querimur, contra eam murmuramus & obluctamur: petimus igitur patientiam, ut reverenter & obedienter noſtram voluntatem divinæ voluntati ſubjiciamus, vel certè ſubjicere conemur, ac contra impatientiam luctemur; non maligne de iis, quæ Deo volente ac permittente nobis eveniunt, judicemus, ſed dicamus, Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum eſt. *Chemnit.* Harm. Evang. c. 51.

3. Give not way to anxious and perplexing thoughts about futurities. There is One who will govern the world well enough, and knows what He hath to do, without calling you to the Council-Table of Heaven. *Let not your heart be troubled*, ſaid Chriſt to the Diſciples, *John* 14. 1. When Chriſt the Pilot was about to leave their Ship in regard of his bodily preſence, their hearts, like the Sea, was ready to work, and caſt up ſome mire and filth; Chriſt therefore ſeaſonably beſpeaks them, ſaying, *Let not your heart be troubled*; and withall, bids them look to the calming-grace of Faith, the exerciſe of that: *Ye believe* (ſaith he) *in God, believe alſo in me.* The way then to have more of quiet, is to get and exerciſe more of faith, as reſpecting the Lord in his Diſpenſations.

4. Imitate the All-wise God, in acting wisely according to thy sphere of activity. God's example is not in some cases a Copy for the Creature to write by: Howbeit, inasmuch as the Lord hath his Platform of Wisdom, his Will: Man may learn *not to be as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding*, Psal. 32. 9. but to direct his course according to the revealed will of God. The Testimonies of the Lord are to be a man's Counsellors, *Psal.* 119. 24. To have an eye ever and anon on this Sacred Model of the Lord's prescribing, is wisdom indeed. *Behold* (saith *Moses* to the *Israelites*) *I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it: keep therefore, and do them, for this is your wisdom*, &c. Deut. 4. 5, 6.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION V.

God is Unchangeable, and his Providence holds correſpondence with his Unchangeable Will.

CHAP. I.

TO illuſtrate this: 1. There are Emblems, Pictures, Similies, which do notably declare this in Scripture. *Ezek* 1.12. the living creatures *went every one ſtraight forward; whither the ſpirit was to go, they went; and they returned not when they went:* that paſſage in the 14*th* verſe is no contradiction: for whereas (as *Calvin* noteth) the Angels are diligent in their work; it is no wonder if the Prophet ſaith, *they ran and returned*; and yet ſaith, *they returned not:* this well agreeth, becauſe they do not return till they have diſcharged their office, or done the work undertaken. To this of *Ezekiel*, add that in *Zach.* 6. 1. the Mountains are ſaid there to be Mountains of Braſs. By theſe Brazen Mountains (ſaith learned and pious *Pemble*) all underſtand God's Provident Decrees and Counſels; which as they are moſt firm and immutable in themſelves, like unremovable Mountains of Braſs or Steel; ſo are they the beginnings of all

Actions and Effects in the world: and therefore these Chariots are said to come forth from between these Mountains; God's *Providence* appointing them their course.

2. The opposition that is made between the Creator and the Creatures, doth set forth the unchangeableness of God. *God is not a man that he should lye; neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Numb. 23. 19. The words were uttered by *Balaam*; he was the leaden pipe for their conveyance, and they are nevertheless pure Sanctuary-water: for *the Lord met him, and put a word in his mouth*, as it is said *v.* 16. To this may be added what we have *Psal.* 102. 25, 26, 27.

3. The Scripture doth far and wide remove any thing of real change from God. *I am the Lord, I change not*, Mal. 3. 16. *---with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, Jam. 1. 17.

Zanchius in Indice fidei & religi. p. 61.

God (as one comments on the place) is a Sun always bright, a most pure Light, and immutably Good; he never suffers an eclipse or change; never is obscured with darkness, but abides the same for ever.

4. God is All-wise, and therefore second-thoughts are not better with him. He being infinite Wisdom, there can be no addition to His Understanding. The Lord is not to seek of his design as man is, who cannot fore-see matters. They are *the princes of Zoan who become fools, the princes of Noph that are deceived*, Isa. 19. 13. *The Lord he is only wise.* Jude 25. *v.*

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The Lamb only was worthy to receive wisdom, Rev. 5. 12.

5. Nothing from without that can properly change the Almighty. All the united forces of the Creatures cannot obstruct his will from taking place. *I will work, and who shall let it?* Isa. 43. 13. *My father which gave them me, is greater than all*, saith Christ, *Joh.* 10. 29.

6. The changes that are in the world, do pay their homage to the unchangeable Will or Purpose of God. God's Will was, That *Joseph* should be the Grandee, or Honourable amongst the Brethren, according to the prophetical dream, *Gen.* 30. 7, 8, 9. Now all those changes or variety of conditions which befel *Joseph*, did providentially contribute to bring about, in the Lord's way of Wisdom, the Lord's Will in regard of *Joseph*'s advancement: so he tells his brethren, *Gen.* 50. 20. *Jonah* hath a commission to go to *Nineveh*, and denounce the wrath of God against them; and this his denunciation is blest to their reformation: and so the Lord's will in the suspension of Judgment is ushered in, which before lay latent or hid. God doth often threaten, not that what is threatned is to take place, but the contrary; the threatning being a sanctified means as the Lord ordereth it. God *wills* a change, and yet changeth not his *Will*. The Looking-glass is still the same, though one while the face is not seen, and another while it is seen.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Opera mutas sed non consilium *Augst.* in Medit. c. 29. Opus non consilium apud Deum credimus mutari: nec variari eum quia per varia Tempora diversa præcipit, sed manens idem incommutabilis & æternus, quid cuiqi congruun esset tempori ab ipsa æternitate in ejus mensit dispositione consilii. *Isidor.* Hisp. lib. 1. Sent. c. 1.

1. THERE is ground then to reject such Doctrine as expressly, or by necessary consequence, asserteth a mutability in God. The Lord's Will is not as the Sea, which hath its accesses and recesses. He is not another God from what he was. The sons of *Jacob* change, but the God of *Jacob* changeth not. His Righteousness is not like the morning-cloud, and the early-dew; but like the great Mountains, as the *Psalmist* describes it, *Ps.* 36. 6.

2. How may wickedly-impenitent ones, or impenitently-wicked ones, tremble at the consideration of God's unchangeableness in his *Providence*, as keeping accord with his Purpose! Their present prosperity is no argument of impunity. The pride of their heart deceiveth them. *Though they exalt themselves as the eagle, and set their nests among the starrs, yet thence will* Providence *bring them down*, Obad. 3 4.

3. How should Christians aspire after a kind of immutability in point of holding to what is good and praise-worthy. The will of a Christian should be for his God. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, That I will keep thy righteous judgments*, said *David*, Ps. 119. 106.

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Be ye perfect (saith Christ) *even as your father which is in heaven is perfect*, Mat. 5. 48. Well then, it becometh the children of such a Father, to be good, eminently good, and to hold on in what is good, lest otherwise it be said, as of old, *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee! for your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away*, Hos. 6. 4.

4. What ground of support is there from hence for the Church of God under all threats, contrivements, attempts, of men and devils. God will have a people, let men and devils say and essay the contrary. *No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper*, Isa. 54. 17. *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, Mat. 16. 18. God is not changeable in his Purpose, Prediction, Promise: and though men may rage, and be as the great Mountain, as it is said *Zech.* 4. 7. yet the Christian hath Mountains to oppose against the worlds Mountains: what the Christians Mountains are, the place before quoted, *Zech.* 6. 1. doth give to understand; they are Mountains of Brass, and so afford two Meditations:

An plus existimemus ad impugnandum posse humana conamina, quam quod ad protegendum prævalet divina tutela, *Cypr.* lib. 1. Epist. 3.

1. That wicked ones will find these Mountains of Brass too firm for their weak shoulders to overturn.

2. That the Arrows which the sons of *Belial* shoot against these Mountains, will recoil back, and mischief themselves in the end. The *Dogs* of the world, whose fingers itch

itch to be medling with God's *Davids*, will have their hands full of Wo one day. A black prophecy there is for such, *Psal.* 52. 5, 6, 7. and they themselves take the course to have it accomplish't, as *Doeg* did: for if the Lord did not pour forth wrath on *Doeg* before *David* came to the Throne; what could *Doeg* expect from a *David*, but to be the instrument of God's wrath towards him, who had belied *David*, and murdered the Priests of the Lord, as 1 *Sam.* 22. It is often to be observed, That the way wicked men take to ruin others, ruins themselves. *Pharaoh*, who will kill the *Israelites*, or drown them, perisheth with his Host in the waters, *Exod.* 14. 23, with 28.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION VI.

God hath His Secrets or Depths: but is never unjuſt in His Providential Diſpenſations.

CHAP. I.

THAT the Lord hath his Secrets, may be made manifeſt if we conſider,

1. How this is ſymbolically or myſtically inſinuated in Scripture. That of God to *Moſes* Exod 33. 23. *Thou ſhalt ſee my back-parts; but my face thou ſhalt not ſee;* doth intimate, we have not full view of the Lord, as when a man comes up face to face; but ſee him in part, at a diſtance, as the Apoſtle *Paul* hath it, *1 Cor.* 13. 9. *We know but in part.* We read, how when the Lord appeared, he vailed himſelf with a cloud, *Exod.* 16. 10. *1 King.* 18. 10, 11. And in *Iſa.* 6. 1. there is mention made of the train or skirts, nothing of the upper ornaments, as one obſerveth: and what may this import, but our ſeeing of the Lord after a poor, low, imperfect ſort, in compariſon of what He is.

Nec caret ratione, quod nihil meminit Propheta de ſuperioribus Divinæ Majeſtatis ornamentis, ſed de fimbriis tantum. Exprimitur conſternatio animi religioſi, qui in viſionibus divinis non ſuperiora, ſed vix infima contemplatur. Et admodum eſſemus fœlices, ſi vel fimbrias Divinæ Majeſtatis pie ac religioſe contemplaremur. *Muſculus.*

2. How

2. How otherwise were there such ground for admiration, if the Lord had not His Secrets or Depths to be admired? If there were no knots to unty, how could it be so said, *O the finger of God?* The Angels are said to *cover their faces with their wings*, Isa. 6. 2 *Paul* cries out, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledg of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. 11. 33. Here by the way let it be noted, That if so skilful a Pilot as *Paul* cries out, *O the depth!* shall such who may be scarce reckoned common Foremast-men, pretend to find out a North-west passage, a new way in the Decrees of God, and the *Providence* of God; and such a way, as that it may be said, *Behold the Plain according to their model*; which yet is a Labyrinth, where they lose themselves; and whilst they labour to Tinker up one hole, they make two.

3. The Scripture plainly asserts, how it is the glory of God to conceal a thing, *Prov.* 25. 2. For the better understanding of this place, I shall annex what pious and judicious *Cartwright* saith: "God verily is to be honoured, "inasmuch as he hath revealed his counsel "and will in many things. But such myste-"ries of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose "causes and reasons are unsearchable, yield "to him the richer crop of honour; such "are the Mysteries of the Trinity, The three-"fold distinction of Persons in one Essence, "The eternal generation of the Son; The

"pro-

"procession of the Holy Spirit; The eternal "predestination of some to life, others to "death; The incarnation of the Son of God; "or the assumption of our frail flesh into the "unity of his Person; Of God, all things "whatsoever are done, both decreeing, and "his *Providence* so ruling, that out of the evil "which is done, he contracts no guilt: Of "Parents sins to be punisht on posterity, to "many generations: Of just judgment to be "executed by the unjust: Of the burning of "the Wife for the Husband's sin, and the "Children for the Parents, *Josh.* 7. 25. Of which, and all such kind, it may be truly affirmed, They do each afford to men a large field of praising and glorifying God; yea, he is the more amply, and with fuller mouth in these to be extolled, than in other matters, whose causes and principles with our minds and understanding we do in some measure take in: for first of all, it is apparent from hence, That God's Wisdom is infinite and unsearchable to the Creature: Moreover, That God is to be believed upon his own testimony, and according to his pleasure may do whatever he will; and so far condescends from his right, when he vouchsafeth to render a reason of his doings or sayings.

That though the Lord hath his Secrets, Depths; yet he is never unjust in his Dispensations. The Lord hath his Throne of righteous Judicature; *The judgment was set, and the books were opened*, as *Daniel* beheld in that Vision, chap. 7. 10. It is said there, *v.* 9. that *the An-*

Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as the snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: there is not the least spot or taint of injustice in his management of matters, for so much may be denoted by this description: though I deny not but the whiteness of the garment may likewise betoken supream dignity, as being an Ensign of Honour, as is observed by *Junius* on the place. Besides this graphical description of the Lord as righteous, according to *Daniel*'s Vision, there are not wanting plain assertions in Scripture: that in *Deut.* 32. 4. *He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity: just and right is he.* And that in *Psal.* 105. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

Majestati Dei proponuntur ista, (1.) quod antiquissimus dies est, ad notandam æternitatem illius. (2.) Quod vestimentum ejus nivei coloris esse dicitur, quæ colorem, insigne fuisse regni, veteres Historiæ sacræ & prophanæ docent. (3.) Quod capillus ejus similis dicitur fuisse lanæ puræ, i.e. ab omni parte purissimus & simplicissimus, adeò ut ne in ea quidem parte, quæ in homine a natura vacare sordibus non potest, vel minimum vitium aut vestigium ejus deprehendi potuerit.

Moreover, let it be considered here, (1.) That some of God's Saints who have been stumbled at some passages of *Providence*, have had satisfaction when the Lord hath let forth his light into their judgments or understandings; they have seen their folly, and given him the glory of his Dispensations: So *Job* 42. 2, 3. So that Prophet, *Psal.* 73. 16, 17, 22. (2.) That considering who the Lord is; He, whose Will is decla-

as declared to man, is for a Rule; and who borrows not a rectitude from the Creature: it is wisdom to hold to this, That his ways, though they are above our Reason, yet never against Right. We find this to be the path wherein we are to walk, when objections to the contrary offer themselves by way of diversion from the said path. So *Jer.* 12. 1. *Righteous art thou, O Lord: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments*, &c. So *Paul*, *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid*, Rom. 9. 14.

Nequaquam autem injustum possumus dicere, in quo divinum esse judicium non possumus denegare, quia summa justitia est voluntas Dei. Neq; enim ideò non justum est quod Divinitas agit, quia capere vim divinæ justitiæ homo non valet. *Salv.* de guber. Dei, lib. 1. p. 23.

CHAP. II.

1. FROM the Lord's having his Secrets or Depths, learn (1.) To reverence so high and glorious a God. Shall the reputed Oracles for Wisdom be cry'd up in the world? and shall not the God of Infinite Wisdom be acknowledged? *Paul* was high in knowledg, and caught up into Paradise, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. and yet

Si scire vis quid tenendum sit, habes literas Sacras: perfecta ratio est hæc tenere. Quâ causâ autem Deus hæc de quibus loquimur ita faciat? nolo à me requiras. Homo sum, non intelligo secreta Dei, investigare non audeo; & ideo etiam attentare formido, quia & hoc ipsum genus quasi sacrilegæ temeritatis est, si plus scire cupias, quam sinaris: sufficiat tibi quod Deus à se agi ac dispensari cuncta testatur. *Salv.* de guber. Dei, lib. 3. p. 64.

hath ground enough to admire the Lord's wisdom, *whose judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out*, Rom. 11. 33. (2.) To be thankful to the Lord's discovering himself in and about such a Dispensation, which otherwise for want of light antecedent or consequent, might, by reason of the darkness of the understanding, have had a black interpretation. It was a condescension of the Lord to *Abraham*, in that, what he was about to do to *Sodom*, was not hid from *Abraham*, who hath a debate with the Lord concerning the process of *Providence* against *Sodom*; see *Gen.* 18. 17, &c. There is something by way of proportion to the Lord's discoveries to *Abraham*, in God's intimations, preparations, as they respect a future dispensation, as some Christians have experienced in some matters. And not only is thankfulness due to God for an antecedent light about matters; but also for consequent discovery, when this or that dispensation hath its actual existence. *Joshua* was startled at the *Providence*; God satisfied him abundantly, *Josh.* 7. Let it then be remembred, That if the Lord discover himself to any as unto friends, the greater obligation is on them, by way of a thankful deportment, considering they are but servants, as Christ teacheth, *John* 15. 15.

2. From the Lord as righteous in all his ways, learn,

1. To reject or cast out the bill of blasphemous complaints against the Lord's dealings. *Providence* is not a Ship loaden with injustice; there are no such wares in this bottom, however some

some passengers in the Ship of Fools say the contrary: It was an old slander, or blasphemy rather, *The way of the Lord is not equal*, Ezek. 18. 25. The confutation of this is annexed there, (1.) more generally; and that 1. by way of contra-position, or implied assertion, *Hear now, O Israel, is not my way equal?* That interrogation is a strong affirmation. 2. By way of retortion; the Lord turns the Cannon about, and fires it on themselves, saying, *Are not your ways unequal?* that is, they are; And this is the reply in the general. (2.) There is a reply more particularly in the following verses, where we have the Lords condescending-apology or defence about his sparing some, and punishing others, in his *Providence*. But not to enlarge on that; in the next place it follows:

2. Hold to this, That the Lord is righteous. Let not only the tongue, but the heart, and sweetly-silent conversation, keep up a correspondence with this truth. And to this end consider,

Veruntamen de hac altitudine discretionis Dei non conturbabitur cor nostrum, si firma & stabili fide omne judicium Dei nullum esse credamus, nec appetamus habere cognitum, quod voluit esse secretum, ut, ubi investigari non potest, quare ita judicet, sufficiat scire quis judicet. *Ambros.* lib. 2. de vocat. Gent.

1. Have Princes their Reason of State? Generalissimo's their Designs in war allow'd them according to a charitable construction? as in *Gideon*'s case, whose stratagem in falling upon the *Midianites* with Trumpets, earthen Pitchers, and the Lamps in them, is not rejected

by the Soldiers as a merry or mad frolick of their Leader, *Judg.* 7. And shall not the All-wise God (who abuseth not Reason of Sin as a covert for wickedness, as men do sometimes) be owned as Wise, Just, Holy, in his Administrations, though we see not for the present the bottom of his designs?

2. Is it not to be observed, how the were discontented spirits, unclean ones, who did mutter against Christ, saying, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* Mat. 8. 29. The Devils here have their plea, and would fasten injustice on Christ.

3. Is not a cavilling spirit at the Lord's dispensations, bad both in its roots and fruits? What are the roots of it, but (1.) Ignorance, *Psal.* 73. 22. (2.) Pride, this litteth up, *Hab.* 2. 3, 4. (3.) Impatiency, or want of waiting on God to see issues of matters, so in *Jonah* 4. 8, 9, 10, 11. (4.) Forgetfulness who the Lord is, and who man is that grumbles at his Maker, *Lam.* 3 39. *Rom.* 9. 20. And as for the fruits, they are none of the best, but bad enough. Men are ready to fling in duty, yea, to throw it off, *Psal.* 73. 13. *Mal.* 3. 14. yea, in the way to blaspheme God, see *Job* 2. 9, *Mal.* 3. 13. *Rev.*

Ergo ne nobis forte contingat impingere adversus Deum & quasi cum ipso confligere, discamus cohibere nostram temeritatem, & id tempestive antequam efferociat: ergo atq; nobis obrepunt cogitationes, quæ Deo aspergant quam notam ignominiæ, eas citissime compescamus: quia si admittimus, paulatim nos irretient, donec nos pertrahant ad extremam hanc vesaniam, ut nulla religio, vel pudor nos teneat quin palam blateremus adversus Deum. *Calv.* prælect. in Esa. c. 18.

OBSER

OBSERVATION VII.

God's Soveraignty displayed in his Diſpenſations, ſhould be a golden Bitt to check man's corruption, and a ſacred Goad to quicken to the exerciſe of Grace.

CHAP. I.

THE Soveraignty of God, whereby, as Abſolute Lord, he doth whatſoever he pleaſeth, *Pſal.* 115. 3. hath its latitude or extent; it is like the Sun, which is not confined to one part of the Zodiack, but his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of the earth. I ſhall therefore conſider it largely, as it is expreſly or implicedly, abſolutely or reſpectively, in ſome particulars diſplayed. A view then we may take of it, (1.) In Spirituals. (2.) In Temporals. In Spirituals, and ſo,

1. In Election of a perſon to life and glory by Jeſus Chriſt. *Was not Eſau Jacobs brother,* ſaith the Lord? *Mal.* 1. 2. Yea, it may be anſwered, and his elder brother too; *and yet the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him who*

calleth, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.* Neither is there unrighteousness with God in passing by the one, and chusing the other: *for he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*, Rom. 9. 11, 13, 14, 15. Thus the Apostle in that Divine Truth of Predestination, asserteth Replies to Objections, and wades farther on in the Controversie in the following Verses, and speaks particularly of the Soveraignty of God, in v. 20, 21. On which *Aquinas* comments, saying, About the election of the good, and the reprobation of the bad, a two-fold question may be moved: One in the general, Why God will harden some, and have compassion on others? The other is special, or particular, Why he takes compassion on this, and hardens that man? There may be a reason of the former assigned; but not so of the later, viz. The meer will of God. An illustration of which, we have in human affairs: for if a man willing to build an house, should have many stones alike and equal gathered together, there may some reason be assigned, why he placeth some above, some below, from the End intended; Because to the perfection of the House which he intendeth to build, there is required a Foundation, which hath stones below, and likewise the top of the Wall, which hath stones above the others: but why he doth place these stones above, and these below, hath not any reason, unless, Because the Artificer or Mason will have it so. Thus *Aquin.*

1. In the conveyance of the means of grace to some, and not to others. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them: praise ye the Lord*, Psal. 147. 19, 20. And this is not only Old-Testament Doctrine, but also New; the Lord directs *Paul* and *Timothy*, where, and where not, they are to preach the Gospel. *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffered them not: and they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas, and a vision appeared to Paul in the night: there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us: and after we had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them*, Acts 16. 6, &c.

3. In conferring gifts and endowments on some, and not on others. All are not alike subjects of such and such qualifications. *Balaam* prophesieth, *Numb.* 23. *Ahitophel* is a reputed Oracle for wisdom and counsel in *Israel*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 23. *Many will say to Christ in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works*, Mat. 7. 22. The Apostle *Paul* supposeth, That some, like Lead, may have a very specious stamp of some gifts, and yet be Lead still, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2.

4. In planting saving-grace in the hearts of some, not so in the hearts of others. *It is given unto you* (saith Christ to the Disciples) *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to them it is not given*, Mat. 13. 11. Our Saviour speaks of two sorts of branches, some fruit-bearing ones, others not so, *John* 15. 2. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, doth tacitly distinguish of professors, when he saith, *But beloved, we are perswaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation*, Heb. 6. 9.

5. In calling home by his grace some at one time of their life, and in a different way in point of circumstances, others not so. Some, their ship arriveth sooner at the Port of Grace, and are brought in with gentle gales; others after a long coursing up and down, meet with rough winds, and so are landed at last. *Josiah*, *Jeremiah*, *John* the *Baptist*, *Timothy*, may serve as instances on the one part: *Manasseh*, *Paul*, with others, may be exemplifications on the other. Some are sweetly won into the Vinyard; others are driven, and (as it were) hunted in, and at different seasons: for we read of the morning, the third hour, the sixth, ninth, and eleventh, *Mat.* 20.

6. In giving larger measures of grace to some, not so to others. Some are smoaking flax, and bruised reeds, *Mat.* 12. 20. Others grow as the Lilly, and cast forth their roots like *Lebanon*, their branches spread, and their beauty is as the Olive-tree, and their smell as *Lebanon*, *Hos.* 14. 6, 7. *John* rangeth Christians into little

the children, fathers, and young men, 1 *John* 2. 12, 13. Why they who are the children, are not the young men; the young men the fathers; and why the fathers are not the young men, and young men the children, the one in one place, the others in the other; is supreamly from the Soveraign Will of God, who could have wrought otherwise.

7. In carrying on some in their journey heavenward, without such falls by the way as others have had. *David*, *Jonah*, *Peter*, did splinter their bones, though they brake not their necks: they fell into the mire, though they wallowed not in it as swine of the Devils Herd. We do not find that *Paul*, with others, had such plunges after their primitive or first acquaintance with Jesus Christ: *I know* (saith *Paul*) *nothing by my self; yet am I not hereby justified*, 1 Cor. 4. 4.

8. In landing some at the Port of Heaven, as it were, with top and top-gallant, pennents streaming, and flags flying: They go out of the world triumphantly; they are in Heaven before they are in Heaven: a sight they have of the Beatifical Vision, on earth. *Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God*, Acts 7. 55, 56. Others, though they may have as much of inherent grace, yea sometimes more, yet go out of the world in a cloud, though not in a stinking snuff. Christ himself, upon the Deity's suspension of his operation, goes off the stage of the world with a *My God, my God,*

God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Mat. 27. 46.

2. In Temporals, or matters reſerring to this life, the Lord's Soveraign Will is diſplayed.

1. In giving ſuch a being for kind. That the Efficiency of God was not otherwiſe employed, in regard of the object, at ſuch a ſeaſon; or in ſome other way, as *Adam* was made out of the duſt of the earth, *Eve* not ſo immediately, but out of a rib of *Adam*, is from the Lord, who acts as he pleaſeth. It was replied by the weeping Shepherd to the two Cardinals going to the Council of *Conſtance*, and demanding of the Shepherd why he was ſo pathetical? *I admire* (ſaith he) *that Lord, that I was not made as yonder Toad.* *Job* takes notice of the Lord's *Providence* in his being, and the mode of it, ſaying, *Haſt thou not poured me out like milk, and curdled me as cheeſe? thou haſt clothed me with skin and fleſh, and haſt fenced me with bones and ſinews: thou haſt granted me life and favour; and thy viſitation hath preſerved my ſpirit*, Job 10. 10, 11, 12.

2. In beſtowing all the integral parts of the body, in regard of their reſpective functions, offices, and operations. *Thine eyes* (ſaith *David*) *did ſee my ſubſtance, yet being imperfect: and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them*, Pſal. 139. 16. That thou waſt not a Creeple from the womb, or blind (as the man in *John* 9. 6.) is from God's Soveraign good pleaſure.

3. In

3. In being birthed into the world at such or such a time. The time might have been such, when the women did eat their fruit, and children of a span long, *Lam.* 2. 20. Our Saviour speaks of some black days, when he saith, *Wo unto them which are with child, and to them that give suck in those days*, Mat. 24. 19. see moreover there, v. 21, 22.

4. In portioning forth the places of habitation. There is a wise soveraign lot of *Providence* in God's disposal of parties to their respective places of abode. *God* (saith *Paul*) *hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*, Acts 17. 26. Some in regard of places for accommodation, whether for the outward man, or inward, or both, may say, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage*, Psal. 16. 6.

5. In calling some to one employment, others to another. *Bezaleel* is a skilful Artificer, *Exod.* 31. [beginning of the Chapter.] *He chose David his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds from following the ewes great with young: he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance*, Psal. 78. 70, 71. *Jeremiah* was ordained a Prophet, *Jer.* 1. 5. *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord* (saith *Paul*) *who enabled me: for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*, 1 Tim. 1. 12.

6. In giving to some such and such Relations. *When Esau lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and children, Who are these with thee, saith he to Jacob? and he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant*, Gen. 33. 5.

33. 5. *Job* was bereft of his children; God gives him posterity again; for he had seven sons and three daughters, *Job* 42. 13. These living goods came out of God's Treasure-house. That reply of *Jacob* to *Rachel*, saying, *Give me children, or else I dye*; doth attest the soveraign will of God, *Am I* (said *Jacob*) *in God's stead? who hath with-held from thee the fruit of the womb?* Gen. 30. 2.

7. In giving and continuing to some as long as he pleaseth, Land, Wealth, Health, Friends, Liberty; to others not so. *He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat*, Psal. 147. 14. Others cut up Mallows by the bushes, and Juniper-roots for their meat, *Job* 30. 4. The rich man feasteth, and hath his Purple and fine Linnen; *Lazarus* is laid at his gate full of sores, *Luke* 16. 19, 20. *Pharoah* hath his liberty to gallop up and down *Egypt*: *Joseph* was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in irons, *Psal.* 105. 17, 18.

8. In taking some out of the world in the morning of their age, others at mid-day, others in the evening. Many Candles are put out, ere they burn out to the socket of old age: yea, some no sooner lighted, but are extinguisht; and many with one breath are blown out together, as in a Plague-time, and season of War: *Shall any* (saith *Job*) *teach God knowledg, seeing he judgeth those that are high? One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease, and at quiet, his breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistned with marrow: and another dieth*

dieth in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never eateth with pleaſure: they ſhall lye down alike in the duſt, and the worms ſhall cover them, Job 21. 22, &c. A young *Abijah*, in whom is found ſome good thing toward the Lord God of *Iſrael*, dies, when wicked ones ſurvive him, ſee 1 *Kings* 14. 12, 13.

Now, that the Soveraignty of God diſplayed, ſhould be a golden bitt to check man's corruption, appeareth,

1. If due reſpect ought to be had to Superiors, much more ought it to be yielded to God, who is abſolute Lord. *Elihu* harps on this ſtring, *Job* 34. 17, 18, 19, *Nebuchadnezzar* is taught this leſſon, *Dan.* 4. 34, 35.

2. Otherwiſe, what is it but to exalt Clay to the Potterſhip? He that quarrelleth with God's Diſpenſations, doth ſo far forget that confeſſion of faith, *Iſa.* 64. 8. *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hands.* Si reputarent homines ſibi negotium eſſe cum Deo, puderet ipſos contra ſuum opificem inſurgere, neq; enim lutum figulo ſuo obſtrepit: atqui nos centuplo minus ſumus, quam lutum. *Calv. prælect. in Ezek.* c. 18.

3. What are parties like to get by contending, but blows? *Woe unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker; let the ſheards ſtrive with the ſherds of the earth, &c. Iſa.* 45. 9.

The ſame Soveraignty of God ſhould be a ſacred goad to quicken to the exerciſe of grace: For,

1. The

1. The influences that Soveraignty hath had on Saints in Scripture, are recorded to this end and purpose, That others should write after so good Copies. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3.18. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*, Psal. 39. 9.

2. God's Soveraignty casts its particular aspects on the graces of Christians. As there is Soveraign Justice, so there is Soveraign Mercy, and each bespeak the exercise of grace according to the nature of the dispensation. More particularly, there are these Graces, on which (as on the Christians Garden) Soveraignty (like the North-wind and South-wind) may blow, that the spices thereof may come forth; to allude to that in *Cant.* 4. 16.

1. A sweet submission of spirit, in opposition to our own judgment, or prescribing to God. *The will of the Lord be done*, said they, *Acts* 21. 14.

2. Contentation, in opposition to discontent at our own condition, and envy at others who may have more gifts of the mind, higher degrees of graces, or more of the good things of this life, than we have. What is a remarkable passage, *Mat.* 20. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because mine is good?*

3. Hopefulness of spirit under the greatest distresses, whether outward or inward. May not God exalt Soveraign Mercy? Are these dry bones? yet may they not live? *Ezek.* 37. 12, 13.

12, 13. Is the heart as low as Hell in regard of fears, sorrows, &c? yet will not he who dwelleth in the highest Heavens, take up his habitation in the lowest heart? *Isa.* 57. 15, 16.

4. Love and thankfulness; and that (1.) with respect to smiling-dispensations, whether they respect soul or body. *Who am I, Lord,* (said *David* upon a view of his mercies) *and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* 1 Chron. 17. 16. See moreover, *Psal.* 116. 1, 2, 3. and 1 *Tim.* 1. 12, 13. (2.) With respect to frowning ones: That there is any mitigation and sanctification of them, is ground of love and thankfulness: for God might have exalted Justice to its height in thy afflictive-dispensations. *It is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not,* Lam. 3. 22.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. LET the meditation of God's Sovereignty be a sovereign allay to the breakings forth of ingratitude, pride, discontent, envy, dejection under his Administrations. Consider, (1.) Is there not a woe unto them that go in the way of *Cain*? Jude v. 11. And what was that which led *Cain* on in his way, if it were not the first part of his way? Was it not discontent at the Lord's Dispensation? *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect: and Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell*, Gen. 4. 5. (2.) Whose judgment shall take place in matters? the Lord's, who is infallible, righteous, supreme; or man's, who is made up of wants and weaknesses? *I know* (saith *Job*) *it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? if he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand*, Job 9. 1, 2.

2. Exercise graces proper to be exercised, with respect to God's Soveraignty. Let the holding up of the finger of Soveraignty, hush all noise, and quicken you to your Lesson. *Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord*, Zech. 2, 13. Consider here three things:

1. Is there any rational ground for a contrary carriage? *Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder? who will say unto him, What dost thou?* Job 9. 12.

2. Go

2. *Go down to the potter's house*, Jer. 18. 2, 3, 4. And what may you learn there? Is not the Clay ductile, pliable, obediential, to the hand of the Potter? And should not a Christian labour more and more to have his Will moulded or fashioned to the Will of his Maker in point of holy submissions? *Carry back* (saith *David* to *Zadock*) *the Ark of God into the City: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him*, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.

3. The way to have God to be gracious, is to exercise grace with respect to the Lord's Soveraignty to be displayed as he pleaseth. There is a way of order, though not of merit; a way of our Duty, though God doth sometimes notably exalt Soveraign Mercy when duty is neglected: *The Israelites provoked God at the sea, even at the red-sea; nevertheless he saved them for his Name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known*, Psal. 106. 7, 8. And though this be so, yet men have no ground to neglect their duty. *Job* his captivity is turned, and God exalteth kindness to a wonder; yet *Job* is reasoned first into an holy silence and sense of his failings; see *Job* 42.

OBSERVATION VIII.

There is a glorious display of the Power of God in the management of matters in the World.

CHAP. I.

THE Power of God may here be considered four ways.

1. In regard of God Himself.
2. In regard of Human Power.
3. In regard of the manner of being displayed.
4. In regard of its extent, or the various objects about which it is conversant.

First, In the first place, The Power of God may be viewed in regard of God himself; and that,

1. As a glorious Attribute of God. As God is said to be *Love*, 1 *John* 4. 16; so He is Power infinite. *God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, That power belongeth to God*, Psal. 62. 11. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power and in judgment*, Job 37. 23. The Apostle *Paul* speaks of the ex-

exceeding greatneſs of his Power, *Epheſ.* 1. 19.

2. As conjoined with Wiſdom. According to this Conſideration, in regard of our apprehenſion, God's Power is glorious in bringing matters to paſs. *He is mighty in ſtrength and wiſdom*, Job 36. 5. *Wiſdom and might are his*, Dan. 2. 20. It is ſaid, That, in Warlike affairs, *Policy ſurpaſſeth Power:* What cannot then both infinite Power and Wiſdom accompliſh, though the Wiſdom of *Myriads* of *Achitophels*, aſſay the contrary!

Secondly, The Power of God in regard of Human Power, will appear the more tranſcendent, if it be conſidered,

1. That Human Power is derivative, or borrowed from Him who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. *Nebuchadnezzar* was a great Monarch, he had Kings ſubordinate to him; yet ſaid *Daniel* to him, *Thou, O king, art king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and ſtrength, and glory*, Dan. 2. 37. All *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Power was but a Slip taken out of Heaven's Garden. He was beholding to God, who placed not only the Crown upon his Head, but his Head alſo upon his Shoulders. And not only the Power, but the exerciſe of it alſo, is mutatitious, or borrowed. So Chriſt to *Pilate*, *Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above*, John 19. 10. But,

2. The Power of God is ſeen as glorious, in compare with Human Power; in that

the Lord can, and doth, when he pleaseth, dethrone the greatest Potentates of the World. How quickly is a *Nebuchadnezzar* hurried from the Palace to the Park, *Dan.* 4. 32. *God is Judg, he putteth down the one, and setteth up another*, Psal. 75. 7. And hence *Moses*, speaking of the two Kings, *Sihon* and *Og*, whom God had caused to fall before his people, *Deut.* 3. 21. annexeth a pertinent description of the Lord's Power, saying, *O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven, or in earth, that can do according thy works, and according to thy might?* v. 24.

Thirdly, The Power of God is to be considered in regard of the manner of its display, and that three ways:

1. Immediately, or without means. If there be wanting means, yet there is never wanting power to bring about matters, where and when God pleaseth, without means. He that made the World without a Tool, can act without an Instrument. If there be not an human arm to crush a *Laban*, yet there is not wanting an hand from Heaven to restrain him: so he acknowledgeth, saying, *It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad*, Gen. 31. 29.

2. Mediately, by means; and these though weak and improbable. God checkt *Egyptian* insolency by Frogs and Lice. The blowing of the Trumpets of Rams-horns, is as effectu-

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al to level the Walls of *Jericho*, as if a thousand barrels of Gun-powder had been mined in under them, *Josh.* 6. 20. *Gideon* with his Three hundred men, routeth the Army of the *Midianites*, as well as if his Army had consisted of Three hundred thousand, *Judg.* 7. 19, &c. The Apostles, being delegated by Christ to the preaching of the Gospel, what multitudes are drawn into Christ by them? who were to confront the world in that work, as it was then adjudged, *Acts* 16. 21. & 17 6. & 24. 14.

3. Contrary to the nature of means is the Power of God displayed. He made the fluid Waters to stand up as a solid Wall for his people to pass by, *Exod.* 14. 22. Fire shall flame, and not burn, *Dan.* 3. 26. Lions shall be hungry, and yet not devour a *Daniel*, *Dan.* 6. 22, 23. An harsh and cruel Jaylor to a *Paul* and *Silas*, shall become all kindness, *Acts* 16. 23, 24, 33.

Fourthly, The Power of God in regard of the extent of it, hath its consideration. *Thou hast* (saith the *Psalmist*) *a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand*, Psal. 89. 13. *With God all things are possible*, Mar. 10. 27. *For with God nothing shall be impossible*, Luke 1. 37. And not only in the general is the Power of God marvellous, but likewise more particularly, if we view it with respect to,

1. Spirituals.
2. Temporals.

1. The former, the Apostle speaks of in *Ephes.* 1. 19. —*the exceeding greatness of his*

power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. As the Power of God was richly displayed in making the Heavens and the Earth; so likewise is it in creating the new Heavens and new Earth, *Isa.* 65. 17. Look we into the new World, and observe what a golden thread of Power is drawn thorow these following Pearls.

1. Conversion-work, regeneration, or the new-creature, declareth the Power of God. *Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power*, Psal. 110. 3. That the Wolf dwells with the Lamb, and Leopard lies down with the Kid, is from the Power of God, *Isa.* 11. 6. compared with *Acts* 9. 5. and 1 *Cor.* 6, 9, 10, 11.

2. The forgiving of sin, and the mortification of it more and more, do likewise hold forth the *Encomiums* and Praises of God's Power. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy: he will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*, Mic. 7. 18, 19. *But that ye may know* (saith Christ to the Scribes) *that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sin*, &c. Mat. 9. 16. *For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. 6. 14.

3. The raising up of parties to a sense of God's love, especially after a spiritual languishing, falls, slips, conflicts with their darkness

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and cloudineſs of ſpirit; doth beſpeak the Power of God in ſo doing. *Create in me a clean heart* (ſaith *David*), *and renew a right ſpirit within me; reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation*, Pſal. 51. 10, 12. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace*, Iſa. 57. 19.

4. The vigorous ſuſtentation of parties in the exerciſe of graces under ſufferings, doth proclaim the Power of God. *Be not thou* (writes *Paul* to *Timothy*) *therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me his priſoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Goſpel, according to the power of God*, 2 Tim. 1. 8. See more, *Acts* 4. 8, 13. *Rev.* 2. 13.

5. The conflict of Saints with Satan, doth witneſs the Power of God. *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly*, Rom. 16. 20. The Devil is a roaring Lion, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. and yet he is not an irreſiſtable Adverſary; for *v.* 9. it is ſaid, *Whom reſiſt, ſtedfaſt in the faith.*

6. Perſeverance in grace, even unto glory, doth exhibit a large teſtimonial of the power of God; ſo 1 Pet. 1. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation.*

2. In the next place, The Power of God is ſeen in Temporals. What is the World but an Hall hung with this Cloath of Arras? We may behold the Power of God in the meaneſt or leaſt of Creatures. Amongſt other things, obſerve the ſparklings of this Diamond in two things.

1. In point of Provision for parties: How did God feed so many thousand, and for many years, and in a Wilderness, of old! See *Numb.* 11. 21. *Deut.* 8. 2, 3, 4. As the Power of God was then seen, so it is seen in a larger Wilderness, the whole World, in feeding the sons of men, as shall after be spoken unto; and the same Power of God is seen as it respects persons, families, in their particular Wilderness. But,

2. In point of Protection, notwithstanding dangers. It would fill a Volume to rehearse the many remarkable preservations which some have had, whilst the Lord had wise Ends subordinate to his glory, for their existence here in the world. It may suffice that Christ points out the Power of God in preserving, when he saith to his Disciples, *Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves*, Mat. 10. 16. What a notable draught have we of the Power of God in the rescue of *Peter* (one of the Church's Bell-weathers) from the Paw of that Lion *Herod*, *Acts* 12. Neither Quaternion of Soldiers, nor Chains, nor Iron-gate, shall hold him whom God will set free. It is a truth, *God's Peters are immortal till their work be done.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. THERE is no ground to be despondent or dejected in and under troubles. Despondency of spirit is an evil of sin, which steals in on parties under their evil of smart. *David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul*, 1 Sam. 27. 1. and yet *Saul*'s day of death was then nearer, and *David* lived to see the day, for a confutation of his black imaginations; for so is it recorded 2 Sam. 22. 1. *And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.* Let not the Christian then be sinking under his *Saul*-like difficulties, but ask his soul this question, Can I find out an Omnipotent Distress? If my Religion say, nay; and tell me there is but one Omnipotent in the World; Why doth my dejected practice say, yea? or tacitly proclaim the contrary?

2. Distrust not the truth of God's word, as if the Lord could not be as good as his word for defect of Power. 'Twas *Zachariah*'s fault, that he look't too much to Second-causes, and did not consider, as he should, the Power of God, which had Nature (though decayed) at his beck, *Luke* 18. 19, 20. If therefore there be as great an unlikelihood of things spoken of in Scripture, in point of being fulfilled, as there was that *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*, being old,

old, should have a son; yet give no way to cavilling-unbelief; but take a view of matters in conjunction with the Power of God; and so indeed we are taught in Scripture, as in the case of the *Jews*, who have lien in a forlorn estate for so many Centuries of years. *Rom.* 11. 23. *God is able to graff them in again.* And so likewise in the case of Antichrist, *Rev.* 18. 8. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord who judgeth her.* And so in any other difficult case, let that be remembred, *Gen.* 18. 14. *Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?*

3. Be encouraged to go on in such work as God calleth you unto in his *Providence*. He that hath a God of Power to set him on work, and pay him wages, may take the more encouragement to follow his work. If God be with *Moses*, as he promiseth, saying, *Certainly I will be with thee*, Exod. 3. 12. *Moses* may take heart notwithstanding all blocks in the way. Heaven's Warrant will bear God's *Moseses* out, notwithstanding all the fury of the sons of the earth, and the sons of hell too: See *Josh.* 1. 6, 7. *Jer.* 1. 17, 18, 19. *Isa.* 28. 19, 20. *Acts* 18. 9, 10.

4. Resolve on the exercise of faith more and more on the Power of God. Let not so glorious a Jewel lye by, without taking frequent views of it by the eye of Faith. Consider two things:

1. Hereby you glorifie God, in giving him a due estimate of his Power. A clear and full exem-

exemplification for this, we have in *Abraham*, *who being not weak in faith, considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform*, Rom. 4. 19,20,21.

2. Hereby you consult your own good and quiet. Had men more of Faith, they would have less of disquiet. *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me*; was a word spoken in season by Christ for the calming of the hearts of his Disciples, *John* 14. 1.

If it be said here, *I question not the Power of God.* It may be replied,

1. It is well if you do not; as good as you have had their reflections on the Power of God. *Moses* questions how Six hundred thousand foot-men should be provided for flesh for a Month in the Wilderness, *Numb.* 11. 21,22. God tells him, saying, *Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my words shall come to pass unto thee, or no*, *v.* 23.

2. Is there not a deceit of heart here? God's Will is pretended, but is not the Power of God questioned? A reason to evidence this, is thus: Because when the distress is greater, the party is the more disquieted. Disquiet riseth with the difficulty. The *Israelites* at the Red-sea were made up of unbelief, *Exod.* 14 11,12. They might have considered, that the Power

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of God, which had made a passage through *Pharaoh* his stony heart for their egress from *Egypt*, could make a passage for them through the Red-sea. *Martha* is questioning the resurrection of her brother, though Christ had said the word for the encouragement of faith; and what is that which staggereth her faith? it is because *Lazarus* had been dead four days, see *John* 11. 39, 40.

3. In reference to the Will of God about matters, that there shall be no defect on God's part. What he promiseth absolutely, shall be made good; what conditionally, is made good likewise; yea, not only when the Condition is performed on our part, but sometimes when failing on our part: as in *Martha* her case; Christ had told her, If she believed, she should see the glory of God displayed, *John* 11. 40. yet she questioneth, as *v.* 39. and *Lazarus* is raised, *v.* 44. True then is that, *Heb.* 10. 23. *Faithful is he who hath promised.*

OBSER-

OBSERVATION IX.

God never hath his Vacation-time; though he may ſeem to do little or nothing ſometimes in His adminiſtration of matters in the World.

CHAP. I.

THAT *Providence* is not idle, though it ſeems to ſit ſtill, will be evidenced, 1. From poſitive aſſertions in Scripture. So Prov. 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* Eyes here are attributed to God, to note not only his knowledg of, or inſpection into the affairs of the World; but his wiſe ordering of all things, in all places, and at all times: for theſe eyes are never ſhut; the Lord is not a ſleepy Watchman: *Behold, he that keepeth Iſrael, ſhall neither ſlumber nor ſleep*, Pſal. 121. 4. *My Father* (ſaith Chriſt to the Jews, who were ſtumbled at the Miracle wrought on the Sabbath-day) *worketh hitherto, and I work*, Joh. 5. 17. The ſenſe is, Though God reſted the ſeventh day from his work of Creation; yet he hath not been at reſt ever ſince; and perpetually worketh hitherto in his *Providence*; and yet none of you durſt entitle Him a violater

Deus nunquam feriatur. *Calv.*

later of your Sabbath; and why then am I adjudged a violater for a doing my Father's work. This I conceive, with others, to be the intendment of that place of Scripture; and it plainly giveth to understand, that God's Providential care in and over the World, is permanent. The Lord withdraws not his manu-tenency; *He upholds all things by the word of his power*, Heb. 1. 3.

2. From exemplifications in Scripture. For if we cast an eye on this or that special draught of *Providence*, we may trace the foot-steeps of the Almighty even there, where we cannot see Him so visibly walk for a time. Draughts of *Providence* are of two sorts:

1. Some respect persons singly, as in *Joseph's* and *Job's* case.

2. Others respect parties collectively, or the Body of a people, a Community of a people, as the Church of God in *Egypt* and *Babylon*, and in times of the New-Testament under persecution. Whoso shall take a right view of the cases of Saints thus instanced in, will find the result to be commensurate to the Truth asserted. He who diggeth the foundation for an house, the deeper he digs, the less visible he is to those who cast an eye towards the place where the digging-work is managed; and whilst this work is on foot, Is nothing done, or doing, because the side-walls are not reared, and tile-stones are not hung? There is a manifold working-hand of *Providence*. God doth ripen persons for mercies, and mercies for persons. There is not only a

work

work of the Shoo-maker, whereby a Shoo is made of this or that proportion; but there is a work of the Physician, whereby the swollen, hydropical foot is reduced to its regular shape, and is fitted for the shoo. If God under some dispensations carry on a work upon us, though he do not this or that work for us, till he see fit, he is still at work; and the work he intends, is in its Second-causes; it is latent there, and comes forth from between the Curtains of antecedent preparations, when the Lord's time is come. The *Israelites* are in *Egypt*'s Furnace, where they must be melted; and the hotter the Furnace is, the nearer *Moses* is with his Pails of water to extinguish the *Egyptian* fires, though the *Israelites* know no such matter: see *Exod.* 2.23, 24. with *Exod.* 3. v. 7, 8, 9, 10. *Job* in like sort is put into Heaven's Mortar, where he is pounded and beaten, to the end the sweet fragor or smell of his graces might come forth: and after God hath taught him many a good lesson, a prosperous condition is on the hand-gallop towards him; it had its foot in the stirrop before; he had friends, they were not impoverish't as *Job* was; they had hands to help, and have hearts to help or set up a broken man in his estate, when the time for so doing is come; *Every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earing of gold*, Job 42. 11.

And we have not only exemplifications of Saints, but likewise of Sinners; and that both singly considered, as well as in a Body

or

or Community. Sinners ripen for Judgments, and Judgments ripen for Sinners. They, by their sinning, are digging their own graves with their own nails. The pit is a digging for them, though it be not quite finisht: there is an [*until the pit be digged for the wicked*, Psal. 94. 13.] What a Bogg or Quag-mire then do sinners dance on! the surface or top-turf breaks, and what becomes of them, with their insultations, projects, designs? *Then she that is mine enemy* (saith the Church) *shall see it, and shame shall cover her, which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets*, Mic. 7. 10.

CHAP. II.

1. KNOW how to understand those passages in Scripture, as to the Lord's forgetting his people, *Psal.* 13. 1. *Psal.* 77. 9. and that in Psal. 44. 23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?* These are not to be understood as to an universal and absolute forgetgetting, and sleep of *Providence*; for God hath not his Vacation-time: He still holds the reins of Government in his hand, all the world over. Neither do they infer an absolute cessation of *Providence* in reference to

to that object-matter which the Lord to our apprehenſion ſeems to forget, and lies dormant: for there is a promoting-work of *Providence*, which we ſee not, and are not ſo ſenſible of for the preſent, as hath been ſhewed, and may further be ſhewed in the next Obſervation. Beſides, ſuch forgetting and ſleep of *Providence*, as it is ſuch, beſpeaks the beauty of *Providence* in the way of bringing things to paſs. It is ſo far from inferring an *inter-regnum*, or letting fall the Scepter of Government, as that it is a glorious demonſtration that God orders matters, and that wiſely, whilſt he ſeems to forget, and be as one aſleep. As the Night, as night, falls under the *Providence* of God, as well as the Day; for there are the Ordinances of Heaven for the Night-ſeaſon, *Jer.* 31. 35. ſo the dark Night, when as to matters the Lord ſeems to ſleep, is reductive to His All-wiſe Model of Government. The Seventy-years Captivity was a long Night of the Church's diſtreſs; and yet thus it muſt be according to Ordinance of *Providence*, *Jer.* 29. 10.

2. Let Saints be encouraged *to work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. *To be always abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. and that, becauſe in ſo doing, they in a ſort reſemble their Heavenly Father, who hath not his Vacation-time, and works one way, though not another, in ordering and bringing matters

about in the World. A Christian should be spiritually industrious. He should be sometimes in one Duty, sometimes in another: If it be not a ploughing-season for work without-doors, yet it may be a threshing-one for work within-doors. If he cannot pray as he would, yet if he seriously sigh and groan at a Throne of Grace, read a verse of Scripture, think on it, talk of it; here is work, and good work too; and leight gains this way, will make an heavy Purse.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION X.

God doth some thing, yea much, whilst He seems to do little or nothing: and doth little or nothing, whilst men are in expectation of great matters to be done.

CHAP. I.

THAT *Providence* speaks, whilst it is in a sort silent; and works, whilst the work intended is at a stand, may be thus evidenced:

1. From the secret and invisible agency of Angels, about that work which *Providence* in time brings forth on the stage. The living Creatures are said to have the hands of men under their wings, on their four sides, *Ezek.* 1. 8. Hands are the instruments for action; and these are vailed over with wings. These hands are at work, though men see them not. And thus the Angel informs *Daniel* how he had been hard at work in the Court of *Persia*, though *Daniel* knew no such matter, *Dan.* 10. 12, 13.

2. From some under-ground foundation laid of matters. There is a seed sown, but it is yet under the clods. Little doth mortal eye

see how *Providence* will bring both the sticks ends together, which at present lies straight. Who of the *Israelites* thought, that when *Moses* was born, and preserved by *Pharaoh's* Daughter, a rescue from *Egyptian* insolency, was remotely born with him, and bred up with him in *Pharaoh's* Court?

3. From Prognosticks, or rather Fore-runners of a work; which as they have a reference to a work, so they hasten it more or less. Consider here a work of *Providence*, (1.) As a work of Mercy. (2.) As a work of Wrath, or Judgment. As a Work of Mercy, and so conviction of sin, humiliation, serious supplication, have their influences. The work may in some respect be said to be done, whilst these are doing. The provend'ring of the Horse, the trimming and tackling the Ship, the whetting of the Sythe, do contribute to the journey, voyage, and mowing of the grass. When the *Jews* consider their ways, hearken to the Prophet *Haggai*, set on Temple-work, the work of blessing of them is at hand, *Hag.* 2. 19. *From this day will I bless you.* Again, as a work of Justice; and so irruptions of sin, insolency in men's wicked courses, taunting at *Zion's* Songs, Lethargical security, horrid blasphemy, do set forward a work of vindictive Justice, which though it seem to take a nap, yet will awaken to the terror of the sons of Belial. See *Ezek.* 16. 49, 50. *Psal.* 75. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *Psal.* 137. 3. with 8, 9. *Zech.* 1. 11, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21. *Mic.* 7. 10.

4. In the next place, *God doth little or nothing whilst men are in expectation of great matters to be done*: And this holds,

1. In regard of the kind of things. The *Jews* had a conceit of a Temporal Monarchship which the *Messiah* should erect; and hereupon *Jesus* the Son of *Mary* is rejected. A spice at least of this Opinion had taken the Heads of the Disciples, *Acts* 1. 6. they ask a question there, which an answer given to *Pilate* might well resolve, *John* 18. 36. The Papists have a conceit of Antichrist to come of the Tribe of *Dan*, who shall do wonders; and so overlook Antichrist to a wonder. It's pity they are so sharp-sighted, as not to *see wood for trees*. As *John* told the Levites and Priests, in reference to Christ, saying, *There standeth one among you, whom ye know not*, John 1. 26. the same may be said, but in a contrary sense, to Papists. The *Anabaptists* of *Germany*, said they had converse with God; and a command from Him, That, all wicked ones being slain, they should constitute a new World, in which only the godly and innocent should live and bear the sway. But what was the monstrous and bloody birth of that Conceit, is not unknown to those who know any thing in History. Men had need then be very cautious what foundation they build on for matters expected; for they who look for I know not what to take place in the World, will see it I know not when. And this leads to the next particular.

Atq; itain diem hodiernum negant venisse Christum suum, quia non in sublimitate venerit, dum ignorant in humilitate primo fuisse venturum. *Tert.* lib. adversus Judæos.

Sleid. com. lib. 3. p. 44.

2. In regard of Time: It is supposed that

the thing expected hath solid foundation; but yet persons are out in the timing of the thing. *Moses* is to deliver God's *Israel* out of *Egypt*, but it is not then when in the vigour of his age he slew the *Egyptian*, Acts 7. 24, 25, 30. Christ is to come to judgment; but not when the *Thessalonians* (through an erroneous conceit taken up) did expect, as *Paul* giveth them to understand, 2 *Thess.* 2. 1, 2, 3. Some have vented their opinion about the downfall of Antichrist, the Calling of the *Jews*, &c. but the time expir'd when it should be, according to their imagination, hath been a confutation sufficient. Reason there is therefore to beware of *Pretorian* assertions in this kind, lest otherwise Religion be damnified, and exposed to derision.

3. In regard of the manner or way of God's doing what is to be done, and in his time for doing. It becometh not persons to confine the Lord to this or that way of working. *David* is to conquer *Goliah*, but it is not by fighting in *Saul*'s Armour, but with his Sling, and stones taken out of the Brook, 1 *Sam.* 17. *Naaman* is to be cleansed, but not in *Naaman*'s fancied way, 2 *Kings* 5. 11. God doth great things for his distressed ones sometimes he takes one way, sometimes another. There is more than one Staircase to the Chamber where he feasts his friends. His infinite Power and Wisdom brings about matters beyond the shallow apprehensions of men. Hear what he saith; *I will bring the blind by a way they knew not; I*

will

will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight: theſe things will I do unto them, and not forſake them, Iſa. 42. 16.

CHAP. II.

1. FROM God's doing ſomething, whilſt he doth nothing; Learn,

1. To do ſomething, by doing nothing againſt God. Let not the ſilence of *Providence* be an occaſion of crying-ſins. That ſervant, who ſaid in his heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming*; and began to beat the Manſervants and Maidens, and to eat, and to drink, and to be drunken; was cut in ſunder, *Luke* 12. 45, 46. And,

2. As to do nothing againſt God; ſo to do ſomething poſitively for God, to His glory, and in obedience to Him. It behoveth perſons under ſuch a poſition of Silent *Providence*, to conſider of their ſins, to be humbled for them, turn from them, and ſo ſweetly to wait the iſſues of *Providence*. *Our God ſhall come, and ſhall not keep ſilence*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 50. 3. and what improvement is made of that aſſertive Doctrine, you may ſee, (1.) By way of terror to thoſe who abuſe the ſilence of *Providence*, in *v.* 21. *Theſe things haſt thou done*, &c. and in *v.* 22. *Now conſider this, ye that forget God,*

left I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. (2.) By way of implicit Exhortation and Consolation, to such who keep close to God, in the way of holy walking with Him, and before Him, *v.* 23. *Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

2. From God's doing nothing, whilst men are in expectation of great matters to be done: Learn,

1. What reason there is for men to look to the ground of their Expectations. To expect other-what, other-when, and otherwise than the Lord hath purposed, or made some discovery of such a purpose, is to build Castles in the air, not in the Heavens; and what hath not its foundation in Heaven, as the Lord is the Founder of it, will not have its superstruction on Earth. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is seated in heaven,* Psal. 119.89. *Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not,* Lament. 3. 37.

2. In the second place, Learn from hence to view the folly of wicked men's purposes, presumptions, designs, in their prosecution and persecution of the Saints of God. O how often are they disappointed! The greedy Dogs often catch not the morsel; and when they do, they vomit it up again. They pay deer for their lust here, or hereafter in Hell. They have their gnashing of teeth

teeth in regard of disappointments, before they gnash them in the other World. *Herod*, to please the *Jews*, will murder *Peter*; the Lamb is taken, but not to be slain till after the Passover; and not then: *for now I know* (saith *Peter*) *of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews*, Acts 12. 12. It is reported, how *Julian* the Emperor intending, the *Persians* being conquered, to fall in on Christians with his Army at his return; and that one *Libanius* the Sophister, spake to a Christian-School-master of *Antioch*, saying, *What is the Son of the Carpenter now a doing?* To whom reply was made, how the great Carpenter of the World was making a Coffin. And not long after, the slain body of *Julian* was brought to *Antioch*. A good lesson for the *Libanisses* and *Julians* of the World to ponder on!

Theod. lib. 3. c. 23.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XI.

There is an admirable adaptation or connexion of things with things, whereby this or that is Midwifed or Birthed into the world. Or, Providence hath its Chain, the several Links whereof are set together by an Over-ruling Hand.

CHAP. I.

THE truth of this may be evidenced divers ways.

Situ verò demonstratur harum conditio, quod aliæ in aliis dicuntur fuisse, id est, non solum cohærentes sed etiam adunatæ Providentia Dei : adeo ut quemadmodum ex causa unâ inferiore procreantur effecta plurima; sic contra, ad effectum unum causæ plurimæ pertineant plurimum. *Junius.*

1. This is emblematically described in the word. We have a most exquisite picture of this, in *Ezek.* 1. the Wheels there are asserted to have a near neighbourhood, *v.* 16. a wheel in the middle of a wheel, to note their implication or connexion; and the living creatures are coupled with the wheels in regard of influences: for when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up, *v.* 19.

2. God

2. God doth expreſly own ſuch an adaptation or connexion of things with things. So in *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, I will hear, ſaith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, and they ſhall hear the earth, and the earth ſhall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oyl, and they ſhall hear Jezreel.*

Docemur etiam, Creaturas omnes eſſe convenientiſſimo ordine collocatas, ita ut una ab altera pendeat, & ex earum connexione, conſtituatur ſuavis illa & concinna mundi harmonia; frumentum ut naſcatur, opus habet terrâ, terra pluviâ; pluvia eſt à cœlo, & omnia ſunt à Deo, qui ſolus independens, rerum omnium concentum efficit & moderatur. *Rivetus* in locum.

3. There are clear exemplifications of this adaptation or connexion, (1.) In Naturals: ſo in the place mentioned, *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. ſo *Pſ.* 104. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. (2.) In Civils: Magiſtrates are to rule, and people to be ruled, *Rom.* 13. 1. And where it is not ſo, there is an adaptation of things in way of puniſhment, *Judg.* 17. 6. (3.) In Sacreds: There is a conſtituted order in the Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 18, *Heb.* 13. 17. And not only is there an adaptation this way, but likewiſe in regard of the means of Grace, and Grace by the means. A connexion there is, but yet arbitrary, according to the good pleaſure of God, when, and to whom Grace is conveyed by the Means. The Apoſtle *Paul* aſſerts a connexion, when he thus ſtateth the matter, ſaying, *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. 10. 17.

4. This adaptation or connexion may be more particularly evidenced, if we caſt an eye,

1. On

1. On Organs or Inſtruments.
2. Occaſions or Inducements.
3. Means.
4. Opportunities for the management of matters.

1. There is an adaptation in regard of Inſtruments miniſterial. In the ſhop of *Providence* there are tools of all ſorts and ſizes. If the Lord will puniſh the Nations, he can find an Hammer to knock them down. *Thou art my battel-ax and weapons of warr, for with thee will I break in pieces the nations*, &c. Jer. 51.20, &c. If the day of viſitation be come for an *Ahab*'s Family, and *Baal*'s worſhippers: there is a *Jehu*, a rough Captain-General, who drives furiouſly, 2 *Kings* 9. 20. If God will vouchſafe good days to a people, he can raiſe up Political Shepherds, ſuch as *David*, of whom it is ſaid, *he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulneſs of his hands*, Pſal. 78. 72. And as there is an adaptation in regard of Political Inſtruments, ſo likewiſe in regard of Eccleſiaſtical. There is a zealous *Elijah* in times of apoſtacy and declining from God's Worſhip; and a *John* the *Baptiſt*, of whom the Angel ſaith, *He ſhall go before him* (i. e. Chriſt) *in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*, Luke 1. 17. There is an admirable adaptation, in the Church's having not only *Elijahs*, *John Baptiſts*, but likewiſe others, whoſe

whose endowments are useful to confute Adversaries, as *Apollos*, *Acts* 15. 28. and to comfort distressed, and build up souls in practical way of converse with God. See *Job.* 33. 23. 2 *Cor.* 1. 4.

2. There is an adaptation, or suiting of things in regard of occasions, or kind of in-lets into this or that. Both the son's and father's discontents, are inducements to *Jacob* to mind a removal from *Laban*, Gen. 31. 1, 2. A report sounds in *Pharaoh*'s ears, that *Israel* fled; probably he conceived the *Israelites* to flye like Hares, such who might easily be hunted back again to *Egypt*; and so is himself thrust on to his own ruin, *Exod.* 14. 5. *David* his good service done for *Israel*, hath an influence on the Elders of *Israel*, to bring them to *Hebron*: *Also*, say they, *in time past, when Saul was King over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel*, 2 Sam. 5.

3. There is an adaptation or connexion of Means in order to this or that which comes to pass. And that as the Means are proper or suitable in order to the End intended, as *Noah*'s Ark is proper to prevent drowning by the Flood, *Gen.* 6. 14. or as the Means are not so proper in order to the End intended by the Agent, though proper and effectual to bring about what the Lord righteously had determined. The Wisdom of God is seen in the follies of men. *Rehoboam*, in following the counsel of young raw-headed Courtiers, instead of clucking the Chickens under the Royal wing, pecks them from him. See 1 *King.* 12. 14, 15.

4. There

4. There is an adaptation, in regard of Opportunities for matters. *Abraham* falls in opportunely on *Chedorlaomer*, Gen. 14. 15. *Saul* looks after the Seer; the Maidens said, *Behold, he is before you, make haste now*, &c. 1 *Sam* 9. 12. *David* chargeth upon the *Amalekites, when behold they were spread upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah*, 1 Sam. 30. 16. There was a wonderful concourse of circumstances in the slaying of *Ishbosheth*; the Cut-throats took the season for their design; it is said, *they went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon: and they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib*, 2 Sam. 4. 5, 6.

Occiditur *Ishbosethus* ab iſtis ſicariis, idq; voluntate Dei:

ita enim ſolet malos punire per malos. Non quod Deus ſuggerat hominibus peccata, ſed quod illis cum ſuâ ſponte erumpant abutatur. *Pet. Mart.* in locum. Ad-hæc. Cogitare debemus, quoties Deus vult aliquid fieri, omnes occaſiones ſtatim ejus voluntati inſervire. Adſunt in tempore frumentarii, omnium animi erant in eo ſolo negotio occupati, rex deſeritur ſolus in cubiculo. Ibidem.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. TAKE notice of an Argument to prove *Providence*, from the adaptation or connexion of things. The admirable adaption of matters, may silence Atheistical cavils. It is said of *Galen*, That upon the view of the wonderful adaptation and connexion of the parts in a Body dejected, he was much affected; yea, pens a Tract in commendation of the Author of Nature. What then may be observed in the little World MAN, as he is termed by some; may as well be observed in the great World, to the praise of God, who wisely orders all in all. The *Psalmist* takes notice of the wonderful disposition of things, *Psal.* 4. he begins and concludes with an *O Lord, our Lord! how excellent is thy Name in all the earth!*

Item, si nulla Providentia sit, quomodo animalium corpora tam providenter ordinata sunt, ut singula quæq; membra mirabili ratione disposita sua officia conservent? *Lact.* Instit. lib. 3. c. 17.

2. Learn what to judg of Contingencies, or of this or that which happeneth in a business. These are links in the Chain of *Providence*. They are Scouts of Heaven's Army, though we are apt to look on them as straglers. In the History of *Joseph*, it may be observed, how the brethren took occasion from the dreams to malign him; they had him now off from his Father's House, and *Joseph* is a confined man in the Pit, his Prison; and whilst there,

the *Midianites* pass by, and they Merchants, who did not it seems scruple the bargain, but gave Twenty pieces of silver for him. Here is an adaptation of Agents, Occasions, Means, Opportunity, and all concurr to bring about what the Lord had wisely and righteously determined. The Dreams were now on Horse-back in order to fulfilling, when *Joseph* is posted away to *Egypt*. All these Contingencies, like the sheats in the Dream, do obeysance to *Providence*.

3. Resolve, by way of Moral practise, on an adaptation or connexion of your duty, according to Scripture, with the good End propounded. If you would go to Heaven, turn not your backs upon the path which leads thither. Holiness is the road-way to Happiness; *without it, no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 13. 14. *He that believeth, shall be saved*, Mar. 16. 16. The man will be found a foolish builder, who builds on the sand, not on a rock; so teacheth our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 24, 25, 26, 27. Moreover, in reference to Civil Affairs, a connexion is there to be observed: —*An honest Calling is to be followed honestly. A man must keep his shop, if he would have his shop keep him. The Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags*, Prov. 23. 21.

4. Meditate on the rich display of the Divine Attributes in the adaptation or connexion of things. Here is a large field for an *Isaac*'s walk. *Isaac*; who went out into the field to meditate, might see, and did after hear

hear a ſtory of a wonderful adaptation of matters in the Marriage-journey, ſee *Gen.* 24. The adaptations or connexions of things here to be meditated on, are not only perſonal, which refer to the Lord's ordering our particular concernments, how he provides, protects, directs, ſupports, and the like; but alſo publick. There are National adaptations or connexions of things, in which God's glory doth ſhine forth. Theſe the godly heretofore have noted, as in *Neh.* 9. there is a large Catalogue there of ſuch adaptations and connexions. The Book of *Eſther* preſents us with a notable draught of ſuch connexions; What a wonderful overruling *Providence* was there in the marriage of the King with one of his honeſt Subjects? in the treachery of *Bigatha* and *Tereſh*, intended againſt the King? *Mordecai*'s diſcovery of the Plot? the King's not ſleeping, &c.? God kept Court at the Court; his *Providence* was waking whilſt the King cannot ſleep: the Lord reads his Church a Lecture of *Providence*, whilſt the King hath the Book of Records of the *Chronicles* read before him; and knows how and when to make uſe of the *Hamans* at Princes Courts, to promote godly *Mordecai's*, for the good and welfare of his Church or People.

OBSERVATION XII.

There is a liberty of God to salve up some other way what is wanting in regard of a visible and proportionable adaptation and connexion of things: or, There is an Extraordinary Walk of Providence *in the World, as well as an Ordinary one.*

CHAP. I.

THE Lord keeps not always within the pales of an ordinary and visible dispensation of things; such a Walk is too narrow for an Infinite Soveraign and All-wise God. Look we abroad into the world, and we cannot well over-look a display of *Providence* on this wise; and that in regard of

1. Instruments.
2. Occasions.
3. Means.
4. Opportunities, in point of bringing about things.

First, As for Instruments, the Lord is not confined to these. If Thieves do not break in on *Nabal*, and so become Instruments of divine

vine wrath; the Lord ſmites him that he dies, 1 *Sam.* 25. 38. And if unlikely Agents for this or that work, be brought forth on the ſtage; yet nothing hinders, as God is pleaſed to concurr, but the effect is proportionable to a likely and promiſing cauſe of ſuch an effect. This may be ſeen in Spirituals and Politicals. *God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe*, 1 Cor. 1. 27. A little Maid is an Hand-maid indeed, whereby a *Naaman* may come to the knowledg of the true God, 2 *King.* 5. 2, 3. It is written of Mr. *Peacock*, how that under his agonies of conſcience, when ſome Miniſters asked him, Whether they ſhould pray for him; He replied, *By no means; do not ſo diſhonour God, as to pray for ſuch a reprobate as I am.* But his young Pupil ſtanding by, ſaid (with tears in his eyes), *Certainly a reprobate could never be ſo tender of God's diſhonour.* Which he well weighing, was thereby comforted and reſtored, when neither he with his Learning, nor any other ſons of the Prophets, could prove ſons of conſolation to him. Again in Politicals: The Sacred Hiſtory informs of the noble acts of *Solomon*, though young and tender, 1 *Chron.* 29. 1. with 1 *Kings* 3. 28. And of *Joſiah*, who was but eight years old when he began to reign, 1 *King.* 22. 1. Each of their green years were well made up by the *Ancient of days*, as the Lord is termed, *Dan.* 7. 9. The Fathers of *Trent* gave thanks to God when *Henry* the eighth was dead; ſaying, That it was a miracle that he had left a Son behind him of but Nine years old,

Hiſtory of the Council of *Trent*, lib. 2. p. 260.

old, that he might not be able to tread in the Father's steps. Thus these good Fathers, for their *gravity*, if not some of them for their *levity*, according to the probable issue of their Doctrine in forbidding Marriage, did soon shoot their bolt; they might have held their pop a while, and so have learnt this lesson truer than their Canons, That *Edward* the Child is more than a Child, when *Providence* by him shall confront the *Man of Sin*.

Secondly, Occasions for matters have not sometimes that influence by way of birthing-forth what in likelihood might be. The *Ephramites* quarrel with *Gideon* for not calling them forth when he fought with the *Midianites*: their sharp chiding (recorded *Judg.* 8. 1, 2.) did not end in a bloody battel, as it did at another time, when the like contending had its closure in the death of Forty and two thousand of the swaggering *Ephramites*: See *Judg.* 12. 1, 6.

Thirdly, The Means for help are sometimes invisible, unlikely, and casual. *Ye shall not* (saith *Elisha* to the distressed Kings for lack of water) *see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattel, and your beasts*, 2 Kings 3. 17. Or if the Means do appear, yet they promise nothing to sense and reason, *Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel*, saith *Naaman? may I not wash in them, and be clean?* 2 King. 5. 12. yet *Jordans* waters cleanse the Leper. God works by what means he pleaseth,

ſeth. Parties ſee a *Jordan* before them, and ſometimes ſee neither wind, nor rain, and yet have water, a help, a ſupply: As that Woman reported of in the late *Iriſh* Rebellion, who being driven into the Mountains, her Milk was gone, and her Child like to periſh; and then is found a Suck-bottle full of Milk, by the good *Providence* of God: Which teacheth us, by ſuch Experiments, not to confine God to wind, or rain, or to warm breaſt-milk. God can provide for his Children without theſe; And little helps, through gracious *Providence*, become great ones.

Fourthly, Opportunities for action take not, accordingly as God in his *Providence* doth inhibit. *David* in the night enters *Saul*'s Camp, finds *Saul* aſleep; he ſlays him not, but brings away the Spear and the Cruſe of water, as teſtimonies of his loyalty, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *Iſhboſheth*'s ſleep coſt him his head, as was before exemplified. There are like opportunities for action, and yet not like conſequent actions. That of Chriſt is pertinent, *Mat.* 26. 55. *In that ſame hour ſaid Jeſus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves, for to take me? I ſate daily with you, teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no hold on me.*

CHAP. II.

Ita enim compositi sumus, ut nos quotidiana, etiamsi admiratione digna sunt, transeant: contrà minimarum quæque rerum, si insolitæ prodierint, spectaculum dulce fiat.

1. BEWARE of slighting ordinary dispensations of *Providence*. There is a foolish gaping after extraordinary ones. God may justly suffer such to starve, who list not to feed on the ordinary bread of *Providence*, but are for the fine Manchet of Miraculous Displays. The chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders, said, *He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him*, Mat. 27. 42. Here is a flying to an extraordinary *Providence*, or else no Faith, no Christ, and no Heaven. Beware then of this *Jewish* leaven; highly value what food God serves in on the ordinary Board-cloath of *Providence*, as well as what is laid forth on a rich Diaper-one.

Hic itaq; cœtus astrorum, quibus immensi corporis pulchritudo distinguitur, populum non convocat; at cum aliquid ex more mutatum est, omnium vultus in cœlo est. Sol spectatorem nullum deficit, non habet; nemo observat Lunam nisi laborantem. *Seneca* in lib. 7. quæst. natur.

2. There is little ground for the enemies of the Church to be confident, and wickedly secure in their ways and designs against the Church. What though there be not four Carpenters for the four Horns which have scattered *Judah*, *Israel*, and *Jerusalem*, to allude to that in *Zech.* 1. 18, 20. yet God knows how to fray and to cast them out by the Carpenter's Boy.

Boy. A *Jael* with an Hammer and a Nail, ſhall faſten Lord-general *Siſera* ſo to the ground, as that *at her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down at her feet, he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead*, Judg. 5. 26, 27.

3. Bear up againſt unbeliet, or diſtruſt of God under great diſtreſſes. Say not, O my caſe, and the Church's caſe, is ſad indeed; behold, the ground is not a leight mold, but thick, heavy, ſtubborn clay, and withal very dry; how ſhall it be broken up? Where are the Oxen ſtrong for the labour? Say not ſo, in way of unbeliet, The great God can moiſten the earth, provide the Oxen, do all in a moment. Remember that great man, in whom unbeliet was regent, 2 *Kings* 7. He talks of Windows in Heaven, and yet the Shop-windows on earth were open the next day, according to the Prophet's words, *v.* 16. the great man ſaw the Market, but it was no fair one to him, for he was trodden to death, *v.* 20. Remember his example, not by way of imitation, but caution.

4. Treaſure up more than ordinary diſpenſations of *Providence*, in which thou haſt had a ſhare. Hath thy Barrel of Meal waſted not, nor thy Cruſe of Oyl fail'd not? according to that, 1 *Kings* 17. 16. O forget not that hand of *Providence*, which by that time that thou hadſt taken out one handful, and ſpent it, did caſt in another handful! Hath God at any time check't a *Laban*, calm'd an *Eſau*, cruſh't an *Herod* intending miſchief? O let ſuch diſplays be written on the heart with a Pen of Iron, and point of a Diamond!

OBSERVATION XIII.

As there is a general Order or Connexion of things; so there's a more special or signal Method of Providence *in and about some Matters.*

CHAP. I.

THIS special Method may be considered,

1. In regard of God's afflicting men for sin. Men have their Method in sinning, God hath his in punishing. The blushing sinner at first, after hath a brow of brass. The *walking in the counsel of the ungodly*, makes way for *standing in the way of sinners*, and so for *sitting in the seat of the scornful*, Psal. 1. 1. Sin is progressive; fresh-men, or Novices in the Devil's School, quickly aspire after the Doctor's Chair. And as the sinner hath thus his walk of vanity, so the Lord doth ordinarily warn before he strikes. There is a firing of the Beacons, before the Host or Army of Judgments is landed. See *Gen.* 6. 3. *Luke* 13. 34.

2. In regard of exalting parties; and so there is an humbling and abasing work upon their hearts, which is preambulatory, or goes before. As *pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*, Prov. 16. 18. so *the fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom*, and

before

before honour is humility, Prov. 15. 33. *Humble your ſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up*, James 4. 10. The humbling-diſpenſations which did betide *Joſeph*, *David*, with others, did lead the dance to exalting-ones.

3. In regard of converſion from a ſtate of nature to a ſtate of grace; and ſo there is conviction-work, which, like the needle, enters the cloath. Men leap not out of the warm bed of their Luſts, into the lap of Evangelical Comforts. The *Iſraelites* were ſtung with fiery Serpents, ere there was a looking to the brazen Serpent, *Numb.* 21. 8. They who are not ſenſible of the bitings of ſin, will not regard a Saviour. The pricking at the heart awakens men to conſideration-work, *Acts* 3. 37.

4. In regard of ſome more than ordinary ſervice, unto which God calleth perſons, whether for Church or State. God is pleaſed to vouchſafe more than ordinary encouragement, when he calleth perſons to more than ordinary employment. God was at the coſt and charges of Miracle after Miracle, when he ſends *Moſes* to bring his people out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* 4. *Joſhua* is told by God, *As I was with Moſes, ſo I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee*, Joſh. 1. 5. *Iſaiah* had an hard Chapter to read unto a ſtubborn people; he was ſenſible of his own pollution; difficulties there were not meerly in fancy's brow; the Lord helpeth and encourageth him, *Iſa.* 6. 5, to the end. *Paul* had an hard task, but the Lord ſweetens all, See *Acts* 9. 15, 16. *Acts* 26. 15, 16, 17, 18.

5. In regard of ſome afflictions with which, by

by way of trial, God may exercise some; and so there's a previous or preparatory work of *Providence*. God is before-hand with some Cordial against some fainting-fit. He strengthens the back before he lays on the burden. Christ is transfigured on the high Mountain before *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, *Mat.* 17. *initio*. and this to corroborate them, when he shall shortly be crucified and transfixed with a Spear on Mount *Calvary*: they needed this display of *Providence*, as bladders, to bear up, when they were like to be plunged even to a questioning whether Christ were the *Messiah*, for so we read *Luke* 24. 21. *but we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.* In 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. mention is made how *Paul* was caught up into Paradise; and in *v.* 7. there is a relation of one, no good one, who did catch at *Paul's* Comforts. 'Twas well for *Paul* that he was feasted in the Lord's Dining-room, before he was had down into Satan's Dungeon of Temptations: Had not the Coat of Mail been first put him on him, the thorn in the flesh would have pierced and sorely grieved him. To conclude this, the Christian's Sun doth shine very gloriously before some notable Eclipse at hand.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE from whence it is that some judicious Christians do give a notable guess at the issues of matters. They live nigh (in point of

of communion) to the great Landlord of the World, and ſo know ſome of his ordinary walks hither and thither: one while he uſeth to walk up the hill, another while down into the valley; this they know and take notice of. Beſides, the great God is pleaſed ſometimes to tell them whither he is a going, *Gen.* 18.17 *And the Lord ſaid, ſhall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?* And *Amos* 3.7. *Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his ſecret unto his ſervants the Prophets.* It is ſaid of *Luther*, That he had a foreſight of the Calamities to come on *Germany*. The Reverend *Uſher* foretold the time of the late Tragedy in *Ireland*. The Sermons of ſome pious Miniſters have been better underſtood by their Hearers ſome years after. They who ſeemed to talk in the Clouds, have been acknowledged to ſpeak from Heaven, as to what hath fallen out on Earth.

2. Beware of croſſing and thwarting with ſuch ſpecial Methods of *Providence*; and that theſe ways:

1. In not heeding warnings, which is the too common ſin of men, who are as the deaf Adder, as the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribeth, *Pſal.* 58.4.

2. In not being abaſed under humbling-diſpenſations. Some are humbled, but not humble. *Pharaoh* had a proud heart notwithſtanding all the Plagues. Too much of *Pharaoh*-like heart is to be found where the Rod of God hath lighted. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*, Iſa. 57. 17.

3. In

3. In not improving Convictions. Some break Prison from them; they, with *Cain*, build Cities; or, with *Saul*, are for Musick; few, with *Paul*, are wrestling at a Throne of Grace under them, *Acts* 9. 11. *Behold he prayeth.*

4. In a backwardness to set upon such particular work as God calleth unto. *Moses* had encouragement to a miracle; yet he draws back, pleads his insufficiency; yea, when that is answered by God, he hath nothing else to say, and that indeed was too unmannerly to be said, *Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*, Exod. 4. 10, 11, 12, 13.

5. In not heeding and improving some foregoing *Providence* in order to a grapple with some future difficulty. It is said of the Disciples, *They cried out, and were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondred*, Mar. 6. 49, 51. What was the ground of their disquiet, Fear? Was there no Antidote to have checkt their trouble? Yea, there was; for Christ had done that before at land, which might have quieted them at sea; the Miracle of the Loaves might have fed their faith, which would not then have been so sea-sick; this seems to be intimated in *v.* 52. *For they considered not of the loaves, for their heart was hardned*

We see then, that there is fault in crossing with the Methods of *Providence*; and it hath been shewed particularly, how persons do thus cross. What remains, but to be on our watch? and that the rather, considering these two things:

1. Satan

1. Satan hath his Methods, which are wily ones; for ſo the Apoſtle *Paul* aſſerteth, *Eph.* 6. 11. Satan's deſign is to pervert and ſubvert. He will be buſie to make a man unprofitable under the Methods of the Lord He labours to make men ſlight warnings, ſtorm under afflictions, ſtifle convictions, to be backward to any good work God calleth them unto; and to be forgetful of ſpecial *Providences*, which may have their future reference for ſupport under Difficulties.

2. It's man's wiſdom to comply with the Methods of the Lord. *Ephraim* is called *an unwiſe ſon*; and why? *for he ſhould not ſtay long in the place of breaking forth of children*, Hoſ. 13. 13. To be ſtupid and blockiſh under the Lord's Diſpenſations; not to eye God in them, and to have a recourſe to Him, and to improve them for good, is to be the *unwiſe ſon* with *Ephraim*.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XIV.

Jesus Christ, as Mediator, is the Father's Vicegerent, Plenipotentiary, or Supream Moderator of things in the World.

CHAP. I.

WHAT foundation this hath in the Word, may appear divers ways:

1. There are types of this, before Christ assumed the human nature. *This is he that was in the Church in the wilderness with the angel, which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us; to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them:* so *Stephen*, Acts 7. 38, 39. To this, add that in *Dan.* 10. 16. *Zech.* 1. 12. And as there are sacred Draughts or Pictures of this, so Predictions of it, *Deut.* 17. 15. with *Acts* 7. 37. *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear*, Psal. 110. 1. with *Mat.* 22. 44. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool.* *Daniel* had a predictory Vision: *I saw* (saith he) *in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there*

there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, ſhould ſerve him: his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away; and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed, Dan. 7. 13, 14.

2. There ſeems to be a notable præludium or preface to this, in Chriſt's ſitting in the midſt of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them queſtions; and in his reply to *Mary*, *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my father's buſineſs*, Luke 2.46, 49. And before this, in the Wiſe-men's coming from the Eaſt, enquiring after him who was born King of the Jews, and doing their homage to him, as *Mat.* 2. 1, 2, 11.

3. The ſolemn voice from Heaven, when Chriſt inaugurated or entred on his publick Miniſterial work, doth witneſs to this, *Mat.* 3. 17. *And lo a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* And ſo in Luke 9 35. *There came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, hear him.*

4. There are plain and poſitive Aſſertions on this wiſe; Mat. 28. 18. *All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth*, Epheſ. 1. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church*, Mat. 13. 41. *The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels*, John 5. 27. *And hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of man.* Compare this with *v.* 22. *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.* This is (ſaith *Muſculus*) as if ſo be we ſhould ſpeak of the Sun; the Sun burns not any one,

but

but hath given all burning to his beams. This kind of speech doth not exclude the Sun from a virtue or efficacy to burn or illuminate, but ascribes the work of burning and enlightning to his beams, in and by which the Sun doth burn and enlighten; for what heat and splendor the beams have, they have it from the Sun. After this sort the Father is said *to judge no man, but to have committed all judgment to the Son*, when he judgeth all things in the Son.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE what ground there is for honouring Christ. This inference Christ himself deducteth, That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*, John 5. 23. with 22. Honour Christ then in his Natures, in his Offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet; in his Ordinances, in his Gospel-day for worship, in his Ministers and People. Honour Him both in judgment and practice, with due respect had to Him according to the fore-mentioned ways.

2. What a bold Adventure is it for the sons of men to affront Christ, or rage against Him! This is an Evil cautioned against, and the attempts of men, as they will be frustrate, so no less dangerous to themselves, if they desist not. What do sinners but take a great deal of pains to get a Stone of vast bigness up the hill,

hill; and when it is nigh up, back it returns, and cruſheth themſelves. The *Pſalmiſt* is pertinent to this purpoſe, *Pſal.* 2. there is a *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* v. 1. The interrogation hath its dehortative conſiderations; No reaſon ſo to do. And as it is horrid ſin, ſo no leſs folly in regard of the iſſue: The Lord laughs at ſuch fooliſh Children's play, *v.* 4. Chriſt is on the holy hill of *Zion*, *v.* 6. there is no beating him off that hill; *Thou ſhalt break them with a rod of iron: and daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel*, v. 9.

3. Here is ground for ſupport and conſolation in the Wilderneſs of this World. Chriſt reigneth, is good news to *Zion*'s friends. There are four props for ſinking-ſpirits under black clouds: (1.) Jeſus Chriſt hath his glorious Titles, which are not empty ones. His Name ſhall be called, *Wonderful, Counſellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace*, Iſa. 9. 6. He is *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, Rev. 1. 5. (2.) The Holy Spirit, as an Omnipotent Agent, ſweetly concenters in, or joins iſſue with Chriſt in the ordering and management of matters: ſee *Zech.* 4. 7. *John* 14. 26. and 16. 7, 8. (3.) All the *promiſes of God are yea and amen in Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 1. 20. There is a promiſed preſence of Chriſt with his people, *Mat.* 28. 20. *Rev.* 1. 13, 20. (4.) Notwithſtanding all the furies of men and devils, the ſad face of things, Chriſt will glorioufly diſcharge the Supream Office of governing the World, and bring all to an iſſue every way glorious: ſee 1 *Cor.* 15. 24. *Rev.* 19. 11, 12, &c.

OBSERVATION XV.

The Angels are capacious Wheels, which move in the great Clock of the World: or, There is a subordinate Agency of Angels, in bringing about Matters in the World.

CHAP. I.

THAT the Angels have their influences, appears,

1. From Titles, Appellations, Descriptions given to and of them. These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro thorow the earth, *Zech.* 1.10. *Are they not all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb. 1.14? The Devil likewise, with his Attendants, are set forth as busie *Peripateticks*, walkers to and fro the earth, *Job* 1.7. 1 *Pet.* 5.8.

2. From the Effects, or work done by them. There is a transcendency of operation to be noted. The Bed of ordinary Second Causes is shorter than that this or that Effect can stretch it self on it. The *Egyptians* are witnesses for this; for the Lord *cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them*, Psa. 78.49

78.49. An Angel of the Lord in a night ſmote in the Camp of the *Aſſyrians*, an Hundred fourſcore and five thouſand, 2 *Kings* 19 35.

3. From Exemplifications, and that in matters of publick concernment, and alſo perſonal. What an influence good Angels have on the publike Affairs of the world, may be proved from *Ezek.* 1. *Dan.* 4. 23. and 10. 13. *Mat.* 1. 19. And that evil Angels have their influences, yet not abſolute arbitrary ones, may be collected from 1 *Kings* 22. where the Prince of darkneſs is a lying ſpirit in the mouth of the falſe prophets, and ſo the warr there goes on. The Agency of Angels is extenſive to perſons ſingly conſidered. *Jacob* ſees Angels aſcending and deſcending his Ladder, *Gen.* 28. 12. Theſe winged Courſers attend the meaneſt Saint. *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*, Pſal. 34. 7. and well for Saints it is ſo: for the evil Angels are for playing ſmall games, as well as greater ones. We read of two men poſſeſſed of Devils, *Mat.* 8 28. The woman of *Canaan* cries out, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou ſon of David: my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil*, Mat. 15. 22.

4. From the particular work ſpecified, about which Angels are verſant. Intimations there are in Scripture, both as to good and bad Angels: they have each their ſhops, where they may be found hard at work in this world.

Firſt, The good Angels may be conſider'd with reſpect to good and bad ones in the world. Their work is to do the Lord's work, and that

as it respecteth the Lord's people, divers ways.

1. Good Angels promote Gospel-work in order to persons being brought to the means of grace, or the means of grace to them. *Cornelius* was willed by an Angel to send for *Peter*, Acts 10. 3, 5. A Vision appeared to *Paul* in the night; *There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us*, Acts 16. 9. The Angels know the state of the Country, and have their influence on the Gospel-Seeds-men, for the casting of the Seed in this or that plat of ground. Yea,

2. The good Angels become truly Angelical Doctors, in discovering or intimating the will of God about matters, and comforting the troubled spirits of his servants. Instances there are to this purpose, *2 Kings* 1. 3, 15. *Dan.* 7. 16. *Rev.* 17. 7. *Mat.* 1. 20. *Acts* 27. 23, 24.

3. Good Angels are Saints Guardians, Defenders under God. *Lot* had experience of this, *Gen.* 19. 11, 16. *My God* (saith *Daniel*) *hath sent his Angel, and hath shut the Lions mouths, that they have not hurt me, Dan.* 6 22. Their preservation, as the Lord pleaseth, is a part of the Angels commission: as it is asserted, *Psal.* 91. 11, 12. This Satan knew, and therefore urged it, though in a maimed sense, and to a bad end, *Mat.* 4. 6.

4. Good Angels are encouragers and helpers on of God's Saints in that work unto which God calleth them. So in *Elisha* his case, *1 Kings* 19. 5, 6, 7. So *Paul*, encouraged to appear before

fore *Cæſar*, Acts 27. 24. *Abraham* tells his ſervant, ſaying, *He ſhall ſend his angel before thee*, Gen. 24. 7.

5. Good Angels may ſometimes be employ'd in afflicting God's profeſſed people; they, as Heaven's Chirurgeons, are taken up in launcing and cutting-work. When thouſands fell by the Peſtilence, an Angel of the Lord is ſeen with a drawn ſword, 1 *Chron.* 21. 14, 15. An Angel threatens *Zacharia*, ſaying, *Thou ſhalt be dumb*, Luke 1. 20. It's probable the Angel might ſmite him with dumbneſs, as the Angels ſmote the *Sodomites* with blindneſs.

Laſtly, Whatever other work the good Angels do, they are not wanting at death, and after death. *Lazarus* dies, and is carried by the Angels into heaven, *Luke* 16. 22. And whether their care be not verſant about the carkaſs, yea, the duſt of a believer, is not to be denied. A contention we read of about the body of *Moſes*, Jude *v.* 9. At the reſurrection the Angels gather together the Elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to another, *Mat.* 24. 31.

In the next place, The Miniſtry of good Angels reſpects bad or wicked ones in the world, and that,

1. By way of inhibition, check, or reproof. The Angel of the Lord ſaid unto *Balaam*, *Wherefore haſt thou ſmitten thine aſſe theſe three times?* Numb 22. 32.

2. By way of compaſſion, or doing ſome office of kindneſs. There is a voice of diſtreſſed nature, as well as the voice of grace,

which comes up before the Lord. *Ismael* had a share in Angelical kindness, when like to perish for want of water, *Gen.* 21. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

3. By way of smart and punishment for defaults. They are executioners of divine wrath. The *Sodomites* were smitten with blindness; *Syrians* destroyed by an Angel of the Lord: And though human creatures shall be instruments to burn the Whore of *Babylon*, yet that may include the Ministry of Angels; they may prepare the fewel, and blow the bellows: for seven Angels are said to pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth, *Rev.* 16.

The second branch of the discourse of the Ministry of Angels, respects the evil ones. These have their shops in the world, and their shops are dark ones. The evil Angels are Rulers of the darkness of this world, *Eph.* 6. 12. Now how the evil Angels have their influences both as to godly and ungodly men in the world, I shall in brief touch, and so pass to the accommodation or improvement of the whole that hath been said.

First, The Devil hath his design against pious ones, and that divers ways:

1. In tempting them to sin. He hath his wiles, *Eph.* 6. 11. He labours not only to catch young birds, but old ones too with his chaffer, and lime-twigs. *David* was an experienced Saint, yet Satan stood up against *Israel*, and provoked *David* to number *Israel*, 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. the sad success of that temptation, we

have

have there recorded in the after-verſes.

2. In diſquieting them one way or other, though he hath not matter of juſt charge to draw up up againſt them. The Devil is the trouble-houſe of the Chriſtian's quiet. He is the accuſer of the brethren, *Rev.* 12. 10. both he, and thoſe who are acted by him, are falſe witneſſes riſen up, and lay things to a Saint's charge that he knew not, *Pſal.* 35. 11. Go we to that good Apoſtle *Paul*, and he will tell us, he cannot be quiet for a buffeting devil, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

3. In impeding and hindring them in ſome particular good work intended by them. The Devil throws blocks in their way. He hath his turn-pikes and barricado's to obſtruct the Chriſtian in his courſe. *Wherefore we would have come unto you* (even I *Paul*) *once and again, but Satan hindred us*, 1 Theſ. 2. 18.

4. In afflicting of them in their outward man, body, relations, eſtate: when God ſees fit to chaſtiſe, and exerciſe his people on this wiſe. A clear and full exemplification for this, we have in the firſt and ſecond chapters of *Job*. God is wiſe in ſuch diſpenſations. He knows how to make a bright Saint, by the Devil's duſky Cinders; and to fetch out a ſpot of a Saint's Garment, by Hell's Black-Soap.

Secondly, Satan hath his deſign on wicked men, or ſuch who are deſtitute of a principle of Grace within; and that,

1. In ſtaving them off from what is good. He works with might and main, that they may not come to the knowledg of God, as God

ought to be known. *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. The Devil holds up his monstrous and ugliſying-glaſſes before the ſinner's face; he fills their heads with prejudices againſt the good ways of God, his Meſſengers, People, who ſhall be look't on as troublers of a Nation, City, Pariſh, Family, that are only the wakeners thereof, 1 *Kings* 18. 17, 18.

2. In poſting them on in what is evil. He will have them be poſitive as well as negative ſinners; not only not to act for God but againſt him; though in not acting for God there is an acting againſt him, but not ſuch an aggravated acting. The Maſters of the *Pythoneſs*-Damſel become Perſecutors of *Paul* and *Silas*, *Act.* 16. 16, 19, &c. *Judas* becomes the betrayer of his Lord and Maſter, *John* 13. 27. Satan entred into him; and many Gentlemen of this world become Satans Hang-men. He hath his influences on them; for he doth not in mens ſhape caſt Gods Servants into priſon, and yet is ſaid to do it, *Rev.* 2. 10.

3. In being ready and forward enough to haſten the deſtruction of them, theirs, what they have. The Devil is for making men more twofold Children of Hell, and cares not how ſoon he can ſecure moſt of his Agents in the priſon of Hell. Satan hath his end, if he can double mens guilts, under the ſmarts

of

of which he is an instrument in inflicting. He delighteth in mischief, and needs not a motive to perswade an *Ahab* to go up and fall at *Ramoth-Gilead*: see 1 *Kings* 22. 20, 21, 22.

CHAP. II.

1. LOOK after an interest in Jesus Christ. For, (1.) Hereby the evil Angels need not be dreaded. Christ, the victorious one, breaks the bow and spear of Hell. Satan had experience of the Power and Valour of the Christian's Generalissimo, in that Wilderness-Conflict, *Mat.* 4. The Devil with all his Forces, shall not tread down the weakest Soldier in Christ's Army, to the nethermost Hell. *I give unto them* (saith Christ) *eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*, Joh. 10. 28. (2.) As the evil Angels need not be dreaded as enemies, so the good Angels, the glistering Courtiers of Heaven, may be look't on as friends. It is said of *Jacob*, *He went on his way, and the Angels of God met him*, Gen. 32. 1. The good Angels will be found good and faithful friends to those who are good: they were *Jacob*'s Guard; and the way to have a *Jacob*'s Guard, is to have a *Jacob*'s God.

2. Believe more, and live more, the Orthodox Doctrine of the agency of Angels. It may put most to the blush, that they live as if so

be

be there were neither good nor bad Angels. The practise of most, holds little correspondence with their belief. It concerns then persons to mind their duty, and that in respect both of good and bad Angels.

1. In respect of good Angels: and so (1.) bless God for the Ministry of good Angels. If sheep, oxen, with other creatures ordained for the use of man, do oblige man by way of thankfulness to God; why not the good Angels, who are ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? *Heb.* 1. 14. It well becomes men to praise God for angels, though we are not to pray to angels; for, as good as they are, they like not such a service, *Judg.* 13. 16. *Rev.* 19. 10. 'Twas the evil angel who would be a worshipful Devil, *Mat.* 4. 9.

If it be said here, *There is not such an appearance of good angels, as of old; and therefore, is there an agency of good angels?*

A. 1. There is no reason to be stumbled at the different dispensation of things then and now, Jesus Christ, the Prince of angels, is come, *Heb.* 1. 1, 2. We have the Scriptures, the Canon of them enlarged, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16, 17. If a Master set down his will for the management of such or such a Farm, what if he do not ever and anon send messengers for signifying this or that about the farm. The Church is not now in its non-age, and so stands not so in need of visible helps, as a pillar of cloud and

and of fire, as of old, *Exod.* 13. 21. *Heb.* 12. 18. The Lord will teach now to exercise faith more: It is not for a Christian *to believe no further than he can see.* This was the fault of *Thomas*, for which he was check't, *John* 20. 25, 27, 29.

2. To argue from the not visible appearance of good angels, to a non-agency of good angels, is absurd: for by the same reason the evil angels are no agents unless they have a visible shape. I do not think that *Job* saw the Devil, and yet he felt him to his sorrow in his sufferings. Good angels are at their work, though neither good nor bad men see them. *Daniel* had no ground to believe that the angel neglected the Church's affairs, because he saw him not for the one and twenty days spoken of *Dan.* 10. 12, 13.

3. It is not denied, as if there were not some angelical display more than ordinary. It is true, the good angels bring no new doctrine, for that were to incurr the Apostolical Curse, *Gal.* 1. 8. Howbeit this inferreth not, but the Lord may at times, after a more than ordinary way, by them help the understanding in the right perception of some Scripture, direct about the prevention of dangers at hand, and relieve others under sinking distresses. *Zuinglius* had a passage of Scripture in a Vision suggested to him, which did clear up the meaning of that phrase, *This is my body*; and that at a very seasonable nick of time. *Scultetus* reciteth a story of *Grynæus*, which happened at *Spires*: There comes one of such a port, presence,

sence, and beauty, which did bespeak singular dignity; he comes to *Melanthon*'s Lodging, asketh for *Grynæus*, who was then absent; and withal signifies, how there were snares preparing for *Grynæus*, into which he would not have that good and learned man fall; and so departs. *Grynæus* by and by returns, whom *Melanthon* bids forthwith be gone from *Spires* to *Heidelberge*; and not long after *Grynæus* his departure, an armed company comes to apprehend *Grynæus*. *Luther* tells how at *Eilbeck* a woman with two children suffered extream want and need in time of dearth: they go towards a Well, and meet with a man (an Angel) who ask'd, Whether she thought to get something to eat at the Fountain? She said, Why not? for all things are possible to God, and easie to be done; he that fed the great multitude of the *Israelites* forty years with *Manna*, he can preserve me and mine with drinking water. The Angel saith, Go home, and thou shalt find three bushels of Meal. And so it was. And thus in answer to the Objection from the non-appearance of good angels, as of old, to the non-agency of angels.

2. There is no reason to be despondent about the succeeding of personal and publick matters. There are invisible friends, who want neither will nor skill to promote what may make for the best. What though there are letts in the way? they know how to remove blocks, or place the wedg so, as that the blocks shall be shattered to pieces. *Abraham*'s ser-

ſervant objects, *Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land*, Gen. 24. 5. he hath an anſwer in *v.* 7. *He ſhall ſend his angel before thee.* Thoſe pious Matrons, *Mark* 16. 1. ſaid among themſelves, *Who ſhall roll us away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulcher*, v. 3. that work they found done, *v.* 4. and how and by whom, *Mat.* 28. 2. doth fully mention.

3. Exerciſe more of faith and hope in God under dangers. Here is no reaſon why the Chriſtian ſhould be hopeleſs and heartleſs in the lack of viſible means. The ſervant of the Man of God, when the Hoſt compaſſed the City both with Horſes and Chariots, ſaid unto *Eliſha*, *Alas my Maſter! what ſhall we do!* But what ſaith the Maſter? He anſwered, *Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them:* and *Eliſha* prayed, and ſaid, *Lord, I pray thee open his eyes, that he may ſee. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he ſaw; and behold the mountain was full of horſes and chariots of fire round about Eliſha*, 2 Kings 6. 15, 16, 17.

4. Demean we our ſelves after a reverend manner in ſolemn approaches to God in duties. *Suffer not thy mouth to cauſe thy fleſh to ſin: neither ſay thou before the angel, that it was an error*, Eccleſ. 5. 6. If Chriſt, the Angel of the Covenant, be there meant; yet the angels are Super-viſors, Spectators, Witneſſes, of perſons deportment. And hence the Apoſtle dehorteth women from immodeſt and uncomely behaviour (according as the throwing aſide of the vail may there import) *becauſe of the angels*, 1 Cor. 11. 10.

5. Imi-

5. Imitate the good angels in point of Humility. They disdain not the meanest Saint, nor the meanest service about the meanest Saint. They go on many an errand for those who are below them. Christ treateth of humility, *Mat.* 18. he called there a little Child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and presseth the Disciples to be as little Children, and withall, in *v.* 10. he speaks of the angels; they (as the speech doth comprehend little Children as to the letter) as their angels, that is, to take care of them. The angels watch the Cradles, though they rock them not; and preserve little ones from and in many dangers, ere they come to riper years: this office the angels indefinitely discharge towards them, whose Life-guard they are; and that without a proud grudging, or grudging pride to be so meanly employed.

In the next place, in reference to evil angels.

1. Admire the Lords free-grace, in being brought out of a state of spiritual bondage to them. This lesson is pressed by the Apostle on the *Ephesians*, who in time past walked according to the course of the world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of disobedience, *Eph.* 2. 1, 2, 3, &c. & 1 *Joh.* 3. 1.

2. Be watchful against evil angels. Come not near their banks, lest they get you into their boat, and ferry you over the other side

of

of sin and danger. The Devil is vigilant to prey on souls, and therefore the Christian should be watchful, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8.

3. Dread that God who can let loose Satan in a moment. The Lord hath both good and bad angels at his beck; they quickly step forth to execution-work; see *Psal.* 35. 5, 6.

Lastly, Be thankful, in that evil angels are restrained from doing mischief. That God ties up the dogs of hell is no small mercy: they being let loose might be biting ones.

1. In regard of soul-disquiets, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

2. In regard of bodily diseases. A daughter of *Abraham*, we read of, whom Satan had bound (lo!) eighteen years, *Luk.* 13. 16.

3. In regard of relations, whom Satan might molest, by casting into the fire and water, as *Mark* 9. 22. or utterly destroy, as *Job.* 1. 12. & 18. 19.

4. In regard of estate. *Job* felt the claw of Satan in those plundering *Caldeans* and *Sabeans*, and the fire which burnt up the sheep, *Job* 1. 14, 15, 16, 17. The *Gadarens* Swines miss a good market, when the Devils become their drivers: and though the owners of the Swine had a loss, yet had they improved the Lords taking off the bridle of restraint, they had been gainers, see *Mat.* 8.

Traditur utile non pro voluntate dæmonum sed ut tali facto innotescat, quomodo in homines sæviunt, quomodo quærunt mortes hominum, qui sic porcos ut perderent, quæsierunt. *Chrysologus Ser.* 9.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XVI.

Not only Angels, but likewise other Creatures are at the beck or controll of Divine Providence.

CHAP. I.

THAT the Angels both good and bad are at the check of the Almighty, hath been collaterally at least evidenced in the fore-going Observation. What hath been said of their ministry is to be understood in way of subserviency to the Lord: The evil Angels, though they act evilly, yet act not absolutely without the permission of the Holy One. The Lord hath them in the chain of Providence, and though they are at times prisoners at large, yet prisoners still, see 1 *King.* 22. 22. *Job* 1. 12. & 2. 6. *Mat.* 8. 32. *Luk.* 22. 31, 32. 2 *Cor.* 12, 7. *Rev.* 2, 10. And as for the good Angels, they are the winged courſers of heaven, ready to do the will of their Lord, *Ezek.* 1. 6, 11, 14. *Dan.* 10. 11. *Luk.* 1. 19. They have a connatural principle within, confirmed by grace, which renders them obsequious to Gods command; and hence we are to propound them as patterns for ready compliance with the will of God, as that

that passage, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, doth imply, *Mat. 6.* 10. There is no need then in further dilating on this. Now, that other Creatures are at the powerful beck and controll of God, is to be spoken to: And this appears divers ways.

1. From the appellation attributed to God in Scripture: He is stiled *Lord of Hosts*, and that some hundreds of times, as some observe. The often repetition of this Title, may import the transcendent verity, and the usefulness of this Meditation, namely, That all the Creatures are under His command, to be lorded over by Him when and how he pleaseth.

2. From the consideration of the Creatures as Creatures. What are the Creatures in their Beings and Operations, but results, ebbings and flowings of his Divine Will: *for he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*, Psal 33.9. The words of men are wind in comparison of what the Lord saith. 'Twas but a word and a world of old. The same powerful speech of the Almighty is heard still in the world.

3. From an exemplary induction: for consider the Creatures as thus distinguisht.

1. Some are without sense; and yet these have the sense to obey the Lord: *for he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength*, Job 37. 6. *Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together*, Isa. 48. 13. See *Psal.* 35.7. *Psal.* 147. 15. *Mat.* 8 27.

2. Other creatures of corporeal existence, which have sense, are at the beck of God: and these may be distinguisht (1) into such which have sense only, without the addition of a rational principle, being swayed by natural instinct. (2.) Into such, which together with sense, have reason or understanding as man hath. Now not only the creatures of the former rank or order, whether they be flying fowls after their kind, or fishes moving in the waters after their kind; or beasts, cattel, creeping things, after their respective kinds; but also Man, as the top and flower of the Creation, are within the verge of *Divine Providence*. The *Psalmist* doth not only observe the *Providence* of God with respect to Angels, *Psal.* 104. 4. but likewise with respect to creatures without sense, *v.* 10, 14, 16, 19. and the creatures which have sense only, as the fowls of heaven, *v.* 12, 17. fishes or water-creatures, *v.* 25, 26. the beasts of the field, *v.* 11, 14, 18, 21. yea, Man, that noble piece of the Creation, and Centre to which the creatures (in regard of their services) as lines are directed to; is there taken notice of, *v.* 14, 15. And thus, according to the *Psalmist* here, the creatures are not without their bridles, and these bridles are in the hand of *Divine Providence*.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. LEARN from hence, what a God the Lord is. He is such an One, whose Dominion is extensive all the World over. The greatest in the World are at his check or controll. *With him is strength and wisdom, the deceived and deceiver are his: he leadeth Counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the Judges fools. He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He removeth away the speech of the truly, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakneth the strength of the mighty*, Job 12. 16, &c.

2. See the vanity of Idolaters. *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles, that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things*, Jer. 14. 22. See 1 *Cor.* 8. ver. 4, 5, 6.

3. Observe an Argument for the proof of Christ's Deity. He lords it over the Creatures; they give homage to Him. The winds and sea obey him, *Mat.* 8. 26, 27. The fig-tree withereth at the blast of his lips, *Mat.* 21. 19, 20. The owner of the Colt straightway sends him, if Christ hath a purpose to use him, *Mat.* 11. 3, 5, 6. Jesus Christ is the spiritual *Joseph*, to whose sheaf

all the sheafs of the world bow or do obeysance: See *Phil.* 2. 10.

4. Take notice whence it is that the worm *Jacob* is not crusht to pieces by the wild beasts of the world. The Lord is he who curbs and restrains as he pleaseth. The *Psalmist* notes this, saying, *When they were but few men in number, yea, very few, and strangers in it* (the Land of Canaan), *when they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another, he suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm*, Psal. 105. 12, &c.

5. Despond not in spirit as touching the conversion of the vilest and most wretched ones, whether they are Relations or others. God can, and in his due time will, make them throw down their weapons, if they do belong to the election of grace. Barren sinners may become fruitful Saints. The Lord can turn Lions into Lambs. *Matthew* the Publican becomes an Apostle of Christ, *Luke* 5. 27, 28. Brutish *Corinthians* are *washed, sanctified, justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 Cor. 6. 11.

6. Be the more encouraged to mind such work as God calleth unto, and that notwithstanding wants and exigencies which present themselves. The Lord hath ways enough to help and provide meat for labourers in his vineyard. He can prevent wants, supply them, sanctifie them. *When I sent you* (saith Christ to his Disciples) *without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? and they said, Nothing*, Luk. 22. 35.

7. What

7. What ground is there for ſinners to conſider of their ways, and to turn unto the Lord with all their heart? How quickly can the Lord of Hoſts draw forth a file of dextrous Marksmen, who ſhall gall them with a flight of Arrows! In *Deut.* 28. there is an Armory of *Divine Vengeance*; *All theſe curſes* (it is ſaid v. 15.) *ſhall come upon thee, and overtake thee.* And if the ſinner thinks he'l flye from the curſe, and get into the City, and ſo be ſafe there; or into the Countrey, and have all well there; all this will not ſecure: for, *curſed ſhalt thou be in the city, and curſed ſhalt thou be in the field*, v. 16. God who is every where, can find out ſinners any where.

Laſtly, What foundation is there for ſupport and conſolation to all pious ones, who keep cloſe to God in ways of Faith, Love, and Obedience? They have the *Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth*, for their Father. Some reckon themſelves happy to have the countenance of great ones, who often prove like *Job*'s Brook, that paſſeth away, *Job* 6. 15. They are the happy ones, who have the benign aſpect of the great God; and therefore godly ones have ground to bear up cheerfully, having an intereſt in a Kingly Friend, or Friendly King. *Let Iſrael rejoice in him that made him. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King*, Pſal. 149. 2.

OBSERVATION XVII.

One and the same Creature may prove a Cordial or a Corrosive, a Friend or Foe, as God in his Providence *ordereth.*

CHAP. I.

BEFORE hath been shewed how the Creatures are at the beck of God; Here is a further illustration of that in the general, but a more particular discovery how one and the same Creature is, after a different sort, at the beck of *Providence*. The truth of this Observation appears,

1. From assertions in Scripture. So *Job* 37. *Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud, he scattereth his bright cloud, and it is turned about by his counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world, in the earth.* He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or a rod, or for his land, or for mercy, *v.* 11, 12, 13. And as this holds in things natural, so also in moral agents: so Prov. 16. 7. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.* An Enemy (as the Lord when and where he pleaseth to exert his will) becomes a Friend, and a Friend an Enemy.

2. From

2. From Exemplifications. So the ſame waters which were *Iſrael*'s Fortreſs, are a Sepulcher or Grave for the *Egyptians*, Pſal. 135. 13, 14, 15. The *Egyptians* deal with the *Iſraelites* at their going out of *Egypt*, rather as with ſons and daughters, than as ſlaves; they give them their portions. *The Lord gave the people favour in the ſight of the Egyptians, ſo that they lent unto them ſuch things as they required*, Exod. 12. 32. It is ſaid of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *They ſhall drive thee from men*, Dan. 4. 32. Who were thoſe Drivers, but thoſe that were his Reſtorers? for ſo it is ſaid, v. 36. *My Counſellors and my Lords ſought unto me, and I was eſtabliſhed in my kingdom, and excellent majeſty was added to me.* *Paul*, from a Perſecutor of the Chriſtians, becomes a ſolid Preacher to them, *Acts* 9. 20, 21.

3. From particular Demonſtrations; and that from the Creatures proving, (1.) Friends. (2.) Foes.

Firſt, Whoſo ſhall conſider God as Almighty, need not queſtion the Creatures becoming Friends: for,

1. Though the Creatures have their noxious qualities, yet God can and doth inhibit them from hurting, when he ſees good ſo to do. A Lion ſlew the Prophet, and not the Aſs which ſtood by the Carkaſs, 1 *King.* 13. 24. The Lions devour not *Daniel*, but they have the maſtery of his accuſers, and break all their bones in pieces ere ever they came to the bottom of the Den, *Dan.* 6. 24. A Viper faſt'ned on *Paul*'s hand, and he ſhook off the beaſt into the fire, and felt no harm, *Acts* 28. 3, 5. *Daniel*'s

Lions and *Paul's* Viper become negative friends, for they hurt them not. And poſitive ſtiends, occaſionally; inaſmuch as theſe Creatures, being ſerved with a Divine Writ of Inhibition. Both King *Darius* and the barbarous people are induced to ſhew kindneſs to theſe ſervants of God, *Dan.* 6. 23, to the end; and *Acts* 28. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

2. As God doth inhibit Creatures from being hurtful, ſo he doth to a wonder render them helpful and uſeful. They were the barbarous people that ſhewed no little kindneſs to *Paul*, and that before the *Viper-Providence* happened, *Acts* 28. 2. *Elijah* had a notable experiment of this: *I have* (ſaith the Lord) *commanded the ravens to feed thee*, 1 King. 17. 3. The Ravens brought him bread and fleſh in the morning, and bread and fleſh in the evening, *v.* 6. One would have thought the Ravens were not fit Truſtees for bread and fleſh; they would rather have eaten it, than brought it to be eaten; but what ſhall they not do, if the great [*I*] of Heaven and Earth hath ſo appointed. I could tell here a ſtory from a very good hand, How a good man was in very great diſtreſs for want of food; and at the very nick of ſuch a pinching want; a ſtrange Dog, unknown to belong to any of his neighbours, comes into his houſe with a ſhoulder of Mutton, which he fairly lays down, and gets him away, having diſcharged the office of a good Market man for thoſe who could eat that Commons, hunger being their beſt ſawce.

3. Suppoſe the Lord do not work according

to

to the forementioned ways; yet He, according to his Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Mercy, can and doth in his Providence render the Creatures as Friends another way. We may distinguish Friends into intentional ones, and eventual ones. *Joseph*'s Brethren acted as enemies; and whilst they thus act, they are eventually, as the Lord over-ruleth, his friends, *Gen.* 45. 5. I make no question but divers can say, How their greatest enemies have in some respect been their greatest friends; whilst others have play'd the *Turks* with them, they have become the better *Christians*.

Secondly, The Creatures become enemies, as the Lord shall make use of them for wise and righteous ends or purposes.

1. Some Creatures have their natural defensive and offensive arms, which they quickly make use of when the sign of battel is given by the Lord of Hosts. *David* tells of the paw of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. We read of two she-bears which came forth out of the Wood, and tare Forty and two Children which mocked the Prophet of the Lord, 2 *Kings* 2. 23, 24. Those new Colonies placed by the King of *Assyria* in the Cities of *Samaria*, feared not the Lord; therefore the Lord sent Lions amongst them, which slew some of them, 2 *Kings* 17. 24. *Deborah* and *Barak*, in their song of Victory, descant on this wise: *They fought from heaven: the starrs in their courses fought against Sisera: the river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river of Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength*, Judg. 5. 20, 21.

2. Other

2. Other Creatures, wherein they are defective in regard of annoyance, by virtue comparatively to other Creatures; may notwithstanding, in regard of co-incident circumstances, prove very afflictive. *Balaam*'s Asse was none of the wildest; for the Asse said unto *Balaam*, *Am not I thine asse upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine, unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay*, Numb. 22. 30. We have here the appeal of the Asse, and the acknowledgment of the Master, both accord in the truth of the premisses; and yet we find an harsh conclusion, for the crusht *Balaam*'s foot against the wall, *v.* 25. So calm a Creature as *Balaam*'s Asse, at such a place where a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side, together with the Angel of the Lord standing in the path of the Vineyards, *v.* 24. becomes a scourge to the Rider.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. FROM the Creatures being made friends to us, (1.) Forget not whence it is that the Creatures ſmile on thee, and do not frown. It's from the pleaſure of their Lord or Maſter, that theſe ſervants in the general, and thoſe of them which are of rough temper in particular, do beſpeak you fairly, and run to and fro willingly to do you ſervice. *I will* (ſays the *Pſalmiſt*) *both lay me down in peace, and ſleep, for thou Lord only makeſt me to dwell in ſafety*, Pſal. 4. 8. *The Lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want*, Pſal. 23. 1. *The Lord hears the heavens, ere the corn, wine, and oyl, hear Jezreel*, Hoſ. 2. 21, 22. (2.) Labour to demean thy ſelf in all godlineſs and honeſty, ſuitably to thy mercies. There is good reaſon for ſuch to ſerve God, who have the Creatures as ſo many good ſervants to wait upon them. There is an obligation on man to obey his God; and the more his mercies are, the ſtronger is the obligation. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah 6. 8.

2. From the Creatures being Corroſives or Scourges one way or other:

1. Obſerve, How the ſweeteſt Wine may become the ſharpeſt Vinegar; and this,

1. With reſpect to Things.

2. With reſpect to Perſons.

1. With

1. With respect to Things. The good things of this life may be matter of affliction. *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and thirst, and in nakedness, and in the want of all things*, Deut. 28. 47, 48. *Hezekiah*, a good Prince; yet what a thundering-message was sent him? *Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord*, Isa. 39. 6.

2. With respect to Persons, as Magistrates, Ecclesiastical Ministers, Family-relations, choice Friends or Acquaintants: All these, instead of Roses, may become pricking-briers some way or other, as may be instanced in.

1. Magistrates, who are the Ministers of God for good according to their institution, *Rom.* 13. 4. these may be snatch't away by death to the grief of a People who sate under their refreshing-shadow. Their deaths and burials become the resurrection of the Subjects sorrows. Witness this in the case of good *Josiah*, who dies and is buried, and all *Judah* and *Jerusalem* mourned for him, and *Jeremiah* lamented for him, as is recorded, 2 *Chron.* 35. 24, 25. Or if they be not seized on by death, they may prove the death or bane of a Nation by their follies. Instances enough there are for this in Holy-Writ, and History.

2. Ecclesiastical Ministers become afflictive; and

and that many ways. When sins abound amongst a people, pride, barrenness under the means, slighting Ministers, and idolizing of them (for these are sad extreams), do, with others sins, provoke the Lord to afflict in and by Ministers. Sometimes they are taken away by death. *John*'s Disciples had too high thoughts of their Master: they began (it seems) to make a party against Christ himself, *John* 3. 25, 26. it's observable, *ver.* 24. *John* was not yet cast into prison. Afterward he was, and beheaded too. Sometimes, though God continue them in the world, yet he may make their tongues cleave to the roof of their mouths. *They shall be dumb, and not be reprovers*, as Ezek. 3. 26. The pipes shall be stopt, and the Conduits in the Towns shall not run as formerly with that plenty of the Water of Life. There is a time when the Prophets of the Lord are in their caves, and not upon the house-top, 1 *King.* 18. 4. Again, some may become afflictive by their slips, falls, apostacies. *Tertullian* turn'd a *Montanist*, and flies out against the Orthodox. One *Speiser* in *Germany* was so powerful in preaching, that Whores left the Stews, and betook themselves to another course of living; and yet after, he return'd to the Tents of the Papists, and miserably perisht. It is said of *Swenckfield*, who did beguile many with great swelling-words of illumination, revelation, deification of the inward and spiritual man, that he had a well-meaning heart, but

Sculz. Annal. dec. 1 p. 161.

Ibid. p. 269.

but a very irregular or erroneous head. God is righteous, as in the digging of a grave for some in the Vineyard, and the binding of others hand and foot; so in the permission of others to leap over the hedg of the Vineyard, and to be be-wilder'd in wild and extravagant fancies and conceits. See *Acts* 20. 30. 1 *Cor.* 3. with 2 *Cor.* 11. 13, 14.

3. Family-relations become Gall and Wormwood. (1.) The Husband is sometimes a *Nabal*, and folly is with him, 1 *Sam.* 25. 25. or if he be otherwise, his death gives life to the Wife's sorrows, as 2 *Kings* 4. 1. *Thy servant my husband* (said that Widow to *Elisha*) *is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the Creditor is come to take unto him my two sons for bond-men.* (2.) The Wife, if she be not more or less a chiding-*Zipporah*, *Exra* 4. 25. a mocking-*Michol*, 2 *Sam.* 6. 20. a sullen *Vashti*, *Esth.* 1. 12. or some other way afflictive; yet there was never a Marriage, but there must be a Funeral; and a vertuous beautiful *Sarah* must away out of an *Abraham*'s sight, *Gen.* 23. 4. (3.) Children are often the sluces of sorrow. *Dinah* was ravish't, *Gen.* 34. *Simeon* and *Levi* make their Father *Jacob* to stink among the Inhabitants of the Land, Gen. 34. 30. *Reuben* lay with his Father's Concubine, *Gen.* 35. 22. *Joseph* is hated of his brethren, and pack't away into *Egypt* to the grief of the old man; who, taking it for a conclusion that *Joseph* was dead, refused to be comforted, *Gen.* 37. 35. (4.) Servants prove vile and

and abominable. Good *Mephibosheth's* servant was a false accuser of his Master, and hook't away half of his Lord's Estate, 2 *Sam.* 16. 3, 4. with 2 *Sam.* 19. 24, to 30. (5.) Superiors, as Parents and Masters, with Mistresses, are sometimes curst-creatures: *Jonathan* is called by his Father, *Son of a perverse rebellious woman*; yea, a Javelin is cast at him from the hand of a Father, 1 *Sam.* 20. 30, 31. *Nabal*, a Master of servants, and a slave to frowardness, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. *Sarai*, though a good woman, yet had a pang of frowardness, *Gen.* 16. 5, 6.

4. Choice Friends bring up the rear of sorrows. Death cuts the knot of Friendship. *I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan*, said *David*, 2 *Sam.* 1. 26. If the Worm feed not on them in the grave, yet some Ear-wig doth hurt. A Whisperer separateth chief friends, *Prov.* 16. 28. yea, there is some unmortified lust, by reason whereof the friend is metamorphosed into a bloody enemy: so *Psal.* 41. 9. *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me.*

Secondly, As it concerns to observe when the Creatures become Corrosives; so, to improve this corroding-Dispensation. Let it be a means to eat out the proud-flesh of some sin or other, which is the procuring-cause of all. The Creatures frown; but doth not God frown on some sin, in their frowning. It would better become persons who cry out of Superiors, to consider, how the taking cold

cold in the feet, is often the cause of disorder in the head. The sins of people, Wives, Children, Servants, are the cold Vapours which cause a Distemper. The head-ake of some above others, becomes an heart-ake to and from those below others. Eye then sin, so as more to be abased for it; and creatures less, in way of disquiet. So doth the Prophet teach, *Lam.* 3. 40. The overtaking of sin with Hue-and-Cry, is the best Remedy under such Maladies.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XVIII.

The great God is greatly to be ſeen in the meaneſt or leaſt of His Creatures.

CHAP. I.

1. THE meaneſt or leaſt of the Creatures ſet off more the beauty of the Univerſe. A Giant is the more conſpicuous, when a Dwarf is brought forth on the ſtage with him. *Behemoth*, or the Elephant, is ſaid to be the chief of the ways of God, *Job* 40.19. the vaſt extenſions of the Elephant are the more illuſtrious, when compared with the ſmall dimenſions of a Worm or Flye.

2. The very ſmalneſs or littleneſs of the Creatures doth ſet forth the Wiſdom of God. The curious workmanſhip about a Watch or ſome leſſer piece of Artifice, doth commend the skill of the Artificer. Creeping things, and Birds flying, as well as Beaſts and Cattel, do bear a part in the Quire, to ſound forth the praiſes of their Maker and Preſerver, *Pſal.* 148. 10. with *v.* 7.

Sicut enim artifices illi peritiſſimi & ingenioſiſſimi habentur, qui in arctiſſimo ſpatio, plurimum artis oſtendunt (ut qui ſub muſcæ umbra currum & equos repræſentavit): ſic Deus ſi non tantam in minutis animalculis potentiam, quantam in majoribus oſtendit; at ſapientiæ certe majus ſpecimen edidit. *Cartwright* in *Prov.* p. 1466.

3. The Creatures by reason of their meanness, did not hold back the sentence of approbation at their creation, or when they were first ushered into the world. The History of the Creation comprehends little fishes, birds, and creeping things; God saw what was then created, that it was good, *Gen.* 1. 20, 21, 25.

4. The meanest Creatures have their ordinary use for which they serve. They are not dumb Cyphers in the World's Arithmetick. The Herb is said to be for the service of man, *Psal.* 104. 14. Even Serpents and Vermin are serviceable, in attracting to themselves that Venom which otherwise might be of dangerous consequence to man. Worms and Flyes are baits for Fishes, and food for Birds.

5. What is wanting in the meanest of Creatures one way, is salved up another. *There be four things which are but little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The Ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer: the Conies are but feeble folks, yet make they their houses in the rocks: the Locusts have no king; yet go they forth all of them by bands: the Spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in the kings palaces*, Prov. 30. 24, &c.

6. There is a display of the glorious Attributes of God in and about the meanest of Creatures; and that in a more than ordinary way, as He is pleased to make use of them. We may behold as in a glass, (1.) The Goodness or Mercy of God. (2.) Wisdom. (3.) Power. 4. Justice or Severity.

1. The

1. The Goodneſs or Mercy of God is ſeen, as when he uſeth them for the help of man. The Ravens in a time of famine bring *Elijah* bread and fleſh, 1 *Kings* 17. 6. The ſtories are known, how *Moulin* at the time of the *Pariſian*-Maſſacre, was cheriſhed for a fortnight by a Hen, which came conſtantly, and laid her Eggs there where he lay hid. And at *Calez*, how an Engliſh-man who crept into an hole under a pair of Stairs, was there preſerved by means of a Spider, which had woven its Web over the hole, and ſo the Soldiers ſlighted the ſearch there. There are other ſtories which I have mit withall, as that of *Ariſtomenes*, who being thrown into a ditch for dead with others, found out his way for egreſs by means of a Fox which came thither, and pointed a paſſage. The Lord *Mountjoy* coming from *Ireland*, had likely periſht, with his company in the ſhip, had not *Providence* befriended them to a wonder, and that by means of certain Sea-birds. The ſtory thus. "The sky being over-"caſt with a thick fog, and we bearing all "ſails, we fell ſuddenly upon the *Skirvies*, an "hideous great black Rock; where after ſo "many dangers eſcaped in the Warrs, it plea-"ſed God miraculouſly to deliver us from be-"caſt away (as it were) in the very Haven: for "certain Birds called *Gulls*, ſeeing our ſhip rea-"dy to ruſh upon them, and their deſart-ha-"biration, with full ſails; roſe crying and flut-"tering round about us; whereat the Gover-"nour of the Pinace being amazed, looked "out, and beholding that terrible ſpectacle, cried

Fynes Morryſon. Itinerary, Part 2. p. 296.

" cried to the Steer-man, *Aloof for life*: which " fearful voice might have daunted him, as it " did most in the ship: but he stoutly did his " work, answering, *Helm a-board*; which done, " the ship by force of the stern, and by the help " of the tide coming in between it and the " Rock, turned about with strange swiftness, " and swam along by the Rock, so near to it, " as the Boat, hanging at the stern, dashed a- " gainst it. Hither may likewise be referred that in *Exod.* 23. 20. *And I will send Hornets before thee.* These creatures (as some observe) by their stings cause a Fever. These were *Israel*'s Forelorn-hope, and did notable execution, as *Joshua* intimates, *Josh.* 24. 12. *Camerius* relates, how some who were besieged, and were hard put to it by the *Turks*, having store of Bee-hives on the walls of the place besieged, and furiously assaulted by the Turks, tumbled down the Bee-hives on the enemies, who were sorely stung, their long loose Garments opening a passage for the Bees: and so gave off in a pang of indignation, to the joy of the besieged Christians, who were holpen by these new and wonderful recruits. And thus for Mercy displayed in the meanest creatures.

2. The Wisdom of God is displayed: for in and by the meanest creatures He exalts His Wisdom to check the pride of the greatest of men. *Zebah* and *Zalmunna* say to *Gideon*, *Rise thou, and fall upon us.* They look't on it as a dishonour to be slain by a Boy, *Jether*, *Gideon*'s Son, *Judg.* 8. 20, 21. The Lord takes down the swelling-humour of men, by means contemptible,

ble, and yet not to be contemned. Frogs and Lice shall teach a *Pharaoh*, who is the Lord to be obeyed. The Magicians, who would not see the hand of God in the Frogs, acknowledg the finger of God in the Lice, *Exod.* 8. 18, 19. *Herod*, who is voiced up for a god, is found to be a mortal man; Worms lay his honour in the dust, *Acts* 12. 23. Thus as the Wisdom of God is seen in unbracing the ratling Drums of the world, and cutting sometimes the heads of them out by Means inconsiderable: so likewise in helping distressed ones. They were not the Captains of fifties, hundreds, and thousands, that did help *Israel* out of *Egypt*. God doth with weak and contemptible tools in the eye of reason, erect the stately house of some gracious dispensation, for his people to shelter themselves in. *Theodoret* tells, how *Sapor* King of the *Persians* besieged the City *Nicibis*, in the which the Christians were sore distressed: On a sudden a vast company of Wasps and Flies came, get into the snouts of the Elephants, and the ears of the Horses and other Beasts, so that Elephants and Horses brake their Harness, cast their Riders, and force the disordered ranks to flie. The King hereupon beholding the hand of God, is necessitated to withdraw the siege. Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. c. 30

3. The Power of God is wonderfully seen in matters of this nature. The Lord exalted his Power in the slaughter of *Goliah* by a stone cast out of a Sling. *Goliah* is stoned for a Blasphemer, whom the trembling *Israelites* reach't not with their Swords and Spears.

The Trumpets of Rams-horns, if the Lord breathe forth his Power in and by them, shall quickly blow down the Walls of *Jericho*, *Josh.* 6. 20.

4. The Justice and Severity of God may be viewed, as in the fore-going instances: for the Attributes of God do concenter, or notably meet, in one and the same Dispensation. God doth by one Dispensation stroak his people, and strike the adversaries of his people. The Saints Crutches are the Sinners Thunderbolt. The Lord writes bitter things by the hand of the meanest creatures, when he will make use of such *amanuenses*. The Palmer-worm, Locust, Canker-worm, Caterpillar, shall lay desolate and wast the Countrey, if he so dictate in his *Providence*, Joel 1. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Amos* 4. 9. yea, Dogs shall tear their own Masters, as *Optatus* relates the story of some, who in contempt threw the Elements in the Lord's Supper to Dogs, and so were torn by them.

Nam iidem Canes accensi rabie, ipsos Dominos suos quasi latrones, sancti Corporis reos, dente vindice, tanquam ignotos & inimicos laniaverunt.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. BEWARE of slighting *Providence* with respect to the meanest of creatures. God, who is the highest, hath regard to the lowest of creatures. *Solomon* was a great searcher into the Works of God; he speaks of the Ant; which as little a creature as it is, creeps into *Solomon*'s Pulpit, as a subject fit enough to be spoken of, *Prov.* 5. 6.

Hic videmus abjectum vermiculum in suggestum a *Salomone* sublatum & subvectum, ut homines inertes ad industriam erudiat, eundemque non tantum doctorem constitutum, sed & judicem, ut sententiam contra illos pronunciet. *Curtw.*

2. Observe the display of *Providence* in and about the meanest of the creatures; and the rather, seeing God may otherwise afflict by them. A Worm doth remotely bite a *Jonah* to the quick. It's an instrument, according to the position of circumstances, for his no little smart and vexation, *Jonah* 4. 7, 8. (2.) Much of kindness both negatively and positively, is handed by these creatures, as the great Creator doth extend his *Providence* in and about them. How much are men beholding to God, not only in the day-time, but in the night-season, in defending them from perils by reason of the least or meanest of the creatures. Pope *Adrian* was choak't by a Fly or Gnat. A Spider might creep into the nostrils whilst one is asleep, and so a man might sleep the sleep of

death. And as for positive kindness handed by these, instances have been given, and others might be made mention of. The great God, who made use of a great fish to preserve a *Jonah*, *Jonah* 1. 17. can make use of little fishes for the help and relief of persons. The Inhabitants of *Rochel* (a known story) were as well supplied by a multitude of shell-fish in the time of their scarcity of provision, as if so be a Whale had been cast a-shoar amongst them. Yea, a little fish may, at some times, be more subservient for the help of distressed ones, than a greater one. I remember a pertinent story, which a worthy Minister, now with God, told me: Some pious passengers were in a ship which had sprang a leak; they pray, whilst others labour at the Pump, and that to little purpose; till at length they espy the water within to be at a stand, and then take heart to ply the Pump, and so get into an Harbour; the ship after, in the dock, is searcht, and therein found a certain hole, with a fish commensurate to, or exactly filling the said hole. Thus, *whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places*, Psal. 135. 6.

3. Live such moral instructions as God in his *Providence* whispereth into our ears from the mouths of the meanest of his Creatures. There are two things, amongst others, which the Scripture doth lesson man here.

1. An industrious and prudent pursuit of such work as God calleth unto in his *Providence*, *Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her*

ways,

ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest, Prov. 6. 6, 7, &c. To consider the Ant, and play the Earthworm, is not to consider and be wise; but to consider her industry, the timing of her work, yea, her manner (as some observe) in following her work, as she dries her grain in the Sun, and breaketh them, so as to prevent the growth of the grain gathered; for otherwise she would starve in a long Winter-siege, if her Provision should not be thus hoarded up. To consider the Ant in a wise management of our own affairs, to God's glory, and our own good, is to consider, and be wise.

Præcipuus igitur, creaturum usus in eo versatur, ut in investigatione naturæ earum proficiamus ad pietatem, tum ut Dei virtutes in illis scintillantes, tum nostras ipsorum corruptelas cum prædicandis illarum ingeniis comparatas, discamus. *Cartw.*

Hic enim finis est inter alios propter quos condita sunt animalia, ut ex iis varia] discamus: defendunt multi idola & Simulachra in templis hoc nomine, quod sint velut libri laicorum, quodque ex iis multa discamus: sed profectò in Formicis & aliis animalculis, plura multo habemus, quæ discamus ut miremur, quàm in omnibus sculptis, fictis, fusis, pictisve simulachris. *Lavat.* in locum.

2. Dependance upon God both for provision for a mortal life, and protection, as God shall be pleased to vouchsafe one, or the other. This Lesson Christ teacheth, *Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;*

yet

yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are ye not much better than they? Mat. 6. 26. And, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbred. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows,* Mat. 10. 28, 29, 30, 31.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XIX.

Wonderful is the Providence *of God in making provision for the large Family of the World: or,* Providence *is the great Steward of, and for, the Houſhold of this World.*

CHAP. I.

BEFORE hath been ſhewed the Lordſhip of God as it reſpecteth the Creatures, how they are at his beck, in different manner, the meaneſt of them not excluded: Now it may fall in the next place, To ſhew what proviſion the Lord maketh for the ſuſtentation of the Creatures, that ſtand in need of *Providence* as a Caterer for them, eſpecially of Mankind; for other Creatures loſe their lives as means to preſerve or maintain the life of Man: And here the *Providence* of God is wonderful, conſidering the vaſt extents of the Family of this world: and this appears ſo, two ways.

Firſt, There is plain aſſertion, or poſitive conceſſion, of this in Scripture. The Word is not ſilent in commending to us the Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Power, of God, in providing for the Creatures which are different for Kind, and many for number of each Kind.

So

So in *Psal.* 104. 27, 28. *These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season: that thou givest them, they gather. Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.* And so in *Psal.* 148. 15, 16. *The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season: thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

Secondly, There are particular demonstrations of this, grounded on experience of God's *Providence* more or less wonderfully displayed, as to his way of providing for multitudes of persons. The *Israelites* in the Wilderness for forty years are there provided for. Their number, the place where, and the time of their being there, do all bespeak the glorious display of *Providence*, as *Moses* doth intimate, in pressing the remembrance thereof, *Deut.* 8. 3, 3, 16. Our Saviour Christ, in feeding the multitude in a desert-place, and that with five loaves and two fishes, gives a taste of God's *Providence* in feeding vast multitudes in the world, *Mat.* 14. 15, to 22.

If it be said here, That these Experiments be more than ordinary.

It may be answered, (1.) These instances however, as taking place in the world in their respective times, fall in as a part or parcel of the stewardship of *Providence*; and so are not only as Gold-lace on the Garment of *Providence* then, but a skirt; which, as the Lord uses

uſed it, did cover the body of thoſe multitudes.

2. *Providence* is notwithſtanding wonderful at other times, when bread is provided, and that enough for ſo vaſt an Houſhold. If Chriſt had put forth his Power in viſible proportion of bread and fiſh for the multitude, whether by creation, or by an inclination of the hearts of perſons to have brought in proviſion at a nick of time when to be uſed, there had been a glorious diſplay of *Providence* theſe ways, though the bread and fiſh did not encreaſe in the breaking, diſtribution, and eating, as it did probably in Chriſt's way of feeding the multitude. That the World is provided for, is wonderful; though the manner how, be different, as the Lord pleaſeth.

3. Whether the *Providence* of God do not hold ſome kind of correſpondence with thoſe inſtances of the *Iſraelites*, and the multitude fed by Chriſt; may more ſafely be affirmed, than denied. There are reaſons which may turn the ſcale: for,

1. If there be a diſplay of *Providence* in a *Canaan*'s becoming a Wilderneſs; why not of a Wilderneſs becoming a *Canaan*, as the Lord ſhall exalt the glory of his Attributes both as to the one, and to the other? If God withdraw his bleſſing, the full Barns become empty ones. There are ways how food is made foodleſs: So *Hag.* 1. 6. *Ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and he that earn-*

earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. It is wonderful to observe how some have penury in their plenty, as others have a kind of plenty in their penury. That which is the ground of this wonderful variety, is the *Providence* of God. *Job* tells of the secret of God upon his Tabernacle, *Job* 29. 4. There is a secret blessing, and a secret curse, which may be noted in the Lord's Dispensations.

2. What God hath done heretofore, may be a pledg of what he will do, though not after the like sort in all particulars. God fed the *Israelites* in the Wilderness with Manna; he provided for them then, that way: if others have their Wilderness, his *Providence* may wonderfully be seen in taking care of them. Thus under more than ordinary difficulties there may be more than an ordinary display of *Providence*; and this extraordinary display may be said to be ordinary, when difficult and pinching-cases do occure. Others, besides the Widow of *Sarepta*, can tell stories by way of some kind of equivalent proportion, as touching the Meal in the Barrel and the Oyl in the Cruse not wasting and failing, 1 *King.* 17. 14. they have been holpen along in their particular Wilderness; their little hath gone a great way with them: the little Buttery hath been instead of a large Larder and Cellar.

3. If due consideration were had to the World, one may say, That it is a large Wilderness or Desart, where the footsteps of the old Wilderness-Dispensation in *Moses* dayes,

dayes, and the feeding of the multitude in the Desart by Christ, may be traced. *I verily believe* (saith *Luther*) *that there do not grow so many sheaves of Corn, as there are people in the world; and yet we are all fed.* To this accords the judgment of *Leiser*, who withall relates this story: *Frederick* the third, the Emperor, at an Assembly of people at *Colen*, when a vast multitude out of many Nations were there met, and he doubting provision would come far short for the relief of such a multitude, commanded both Men and Loaves to be numbred; and when the number of the Men was found far to exceed, he feared many would perish with famine: but it was otherwise; for no one perisht, they had food to the full, and great plenty did remain. And thus in answer to the Objection, and consequently for the evidencing the wonderful *Providence* of God in feeding the sons of men.

Non desunt viri docti & prudentes qui putant plures homines in orbe terrarum vivere, quàm quotannis manipuli frugum crescant & numerentur in agris. Neqs hoc vero est absimile.

Maxime si inspiciantur urbes maritimæ, quæ quidem sunt populosissimæ, & interdum ne minimum quidem agri possident ex quo frumenta sumant. Unde verò hi homines omnes aluntur ut comedant, & superfit, juxta verbum Domini, 2 *Reg.* 4. 44? ex hac benedictione filii Dei, quæ facit, ut non tantum semina in agris, sed etiam frumentum in horreis, in granariis; quin & farina in vasculo, panis in furno, in mensa, in ore & ventriculo manducantium, mirabiliter & invisibiliter crescat & augeatur. Lib. 4. Harm. Evang. c. 76.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE the unbelief and atheism of those who can see no other way than a bloody one for a Nation's subsistence! In the History of the Civil-warrs of *France*, it is recorded, that when complaints were made of barbarous and cut-throat out-rages; the Duke of *Guise* answered, *There is no remedy; we have too much people in France: I will deal so, as Quals may be good-cheap.* This Man-of-blood little considered of God's *Providence*, which is the Store-house of Provision. Had he cast an eye back on *Providence* towards *Canaan* a lesser Countrey than *France*, he might have replied, *O pray, pray, that the sword may be turned in the plough share, and the spear into a pruning-hook.* Let Atheistical Politicians talk then of their bloody way; let Christians remember the milky-one of obedience to God. So *Deut.* 28. 1. *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments, &c. the Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give thee rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand---v. 12.*

2. Observe the *Providence* of God in his wise-ordering the affairs of the great House of the World. It is said, that when the Queen of *Sheba* had seen all *Solomon*'s wisdom, and the House that he had built, and the meat of his

his Table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his Cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the House of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her, 1 *King.* 10.4,5. There is indeed greater ground for admiration and astonishment, in beholding the order and provision of the great House of the World: for *Solomon's* wisdom by which he managed the affairs of his house, was but a derived drop of that *Providence* by which God governs the World.

3. Secure a special interest in the great Steward of the World, I mean the *Providence* of God. It is said of pious Mr. *Hieron*, that when his Wife was making her moan to him, by reason of a large Family of Children, whom now he was about to leave to the wide world, the time of his dissolution drawing near; that then no less graciously than wittily he replied, saying, *God, who provideth for the young Ravens, will provide for the young* Herons. Thus said that Man of God; and his Family had experience of God's gracious *Providence* towards them. It well becometh Christians then to be acting faith on God's *Providence* for them and theirs. This is a point that our Saviour insists on, *Mat.* 6. 26, *&c.* There are two general Arguments by which this duty is backt: The one is from the lesser to the greater; *If God take care for the fowls of the air, which sow not, neither do reap, nor gather into barns: will he not*

feed the children? The other is drawn from the greater to the less: *If God be a heavenly Father, gives a Kingdom, spares not his own Son, will he not take care for lesser matters, so far as they are needful here in this state of pilgrimage?* This later Argument we have implied there, and more expres in *Luke* 12.32. to which add that of the Apostle in *Rom.* 8. 32.

If it be objected here, That many of God's children have their hardships; yea, some have been starved in prisons: and therefore what doth it avail to secure an interest in God's *Providence*, or to act faith thereon?

A. 1. A Truth is not to be thrown by, as a Pebble, because of some exception. It is a good rule given for the understanding of *Solomon's Proverbs*, how divers of them are to be understood as often, or frequently, thus: The ordinary way of having Corn, is by plowing and sowing; shall men throw aside all, because they have not a good-year of Corn at times. *David* acknowledgeth God's *Providence* towards him from the womb, and from the breast, *Psal.* 22. 9, 10. yea, he had experience of God's bounty in preparing a Table for him, *Psal.* 23. 5. yet a time of straits he had, when he sent to *Nabal* for provision, 1 *Sam.* 25.

2. *Providence* is a wise Steward. It is the order of the great House, that some be put out of Commons, or kept short at least for a time.

My

My wants (saith one) *kill my wantonness.* It's a hard matter not to have the heart swell when the bags swell. The fat pastures make way for exalted hearts and forgetting of God, *Hos.* 13. 6. And though this be not the case of others, yet God hath wise ends in their debasements. See 1 *Cor.* 4. 11, 12. *Rev.* 2. 9.

3. They who have a care to please God, have experience of God's care over them, notwithstanding their straits. *David*, though denied by a surly *Nabal*, yet had provision brought in by means of a wise *Abigail*. *Jeremiah* finds fair quarter amongst the *Chaldeans*, Jer. 39. 11, 12. The brethren which dwelt in *Judea*, had relief sent to them in the time of the great dearth, *Acts* 11. 28, 29. God's *Providence* is seen, as in straits, so in the helps handed in under them.

4. Suppose some are starved by enemies; yet what is this more (if the Lord take them out of the world this way) than to dye on their beds; when *a man's life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat*, Job 33. 20. A man dyes who hath victuals but no stomach, as he dyes who hath a stomach but no victuals. Moreover God knows how to salve up this sharp dispensation.

1. He can abate the pain and torment of hunger; as one said, *If you take away my meat, God can take away my stomach.* See *Exod* 34 28.

2. The Lord may then feast them with other kind of meat, as Christ speaketh, *John* 4. 32.

Non fovetur in metallis lecto & culcitris corpus, sed refrigerio & solatio Christi.

3. They are honoured by God to be starved as well as others to be burnt for his sake. Suffering for Christ any way is honourable. See *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. *Phil.* 1. 29.

4. They will not look like Starvelings one day; the vile body will become a glorious body, *Phil.* 2. 21.

Humi jacent fessa laboribus viscera, sed pœna non est cum Christo jacere. Squalent sine balneis membra situ & sorde deformia, sed spiritualiter intus abluitur, quod foris carnaliter sordidatur. *Cyprian.* lib. 3. Epist. 25.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XX.

The Lord bears up the World, by bearing down Sin in the World.

CHAP. I.

AS God's *Providence* is seen in making provision for the world: so in bearing down sin in the World. The World would quickly be resolved into a Chaos or heap of confusion, did not the *Providence* of God exert it self, and that particularly in and about the sins of men; who having since the fall of our first Parents destructive Principles wrapt up in their natures, would certainly give the product of such Principles in black and bloody Conclusions, were there not a *Providence* which did counterwork them, by bearing down sin; and these ways, amongst others.

First, By ushering in good tidings of a Saviour, for whose sake the World is spared from destruction; for time is now vouchsafed for the ingathering of a chosen generation. *Adam*, and so all mankind, were dead in law; Judgment was to take place; Christ, the Seed of the Woman, steps in, becomes a Surety, and bruiseth the head of the Serpent, *Gen.* 3. 14, 15. *He shall* (said the Angel to *Joseph*) *save his people from their sins*, Mat. 1. 21. the

tares then are spared, till the Wheat be gathered, *Mat.* 13. 29, 30.

Secondly, By an inward work of sanctification promoted in the hearts of redeemed ones by Christ, *who* (saith the Apostle *Paul*) *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14.

There is a two-fold bearing down of sin here to be considered:

1. A bearing of it down in Saints: for they are justified by Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. a stop is put to sin in them, yea, to such sins which were destructive to humane society; for such sins were to be found amongst the *Corinthians* before conversion, in regard of their reigning power, *v.* 9, 10, 11, of the same Chapter.

2. Bearing of it down by *Saints*, and that,

1. In regard of their common and general Calling, as Christians: so they do, or at least wise are to live it down, and pray it down in others. The best Saint may contribute something as a polish't shaft in the hand of the Lord to wound sin. The Lord in his *Providence* hath cast Saints as Salt up and down the World; and were it not for this Salt, there would be such an ill savour, that it would be time to set the World on fire. See *Mat.* 5. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Phil.* 2. 15. 1 *Pet.* 2. 11, 12.

2. In regard of some Calling special: and so,

1. As Magistrates: These, as Saints, are to use their authority and power for Christ. *Job*

brake

brake the jaws of the wicked, and pluck't the spoil out of his teeth, *Job* 29.17. *When I* (saith *David*) *shall receive the congregation, I will judg uprightly*, Psal. 75. 2.

2. As Ecclesiastical Ministers, who may be said to bear down sin,

1. In regard of the real conversion of some. Sin receives a killing-blow from the preaching of the word; see *Acts* 26. 18. *Rom.* 10. 17.

2. In regard of moral illumination of others, whereby some, for a time at least, are curbed, *Mark* 6. 20. Notorious evils are the proper fruit of the Tree of Ignorance, *Gen.* 20. 11. 1 *Pet.* 1. 14. with chap. 4. v. 3, 4. The very checking in of vile lusts, may give a check to terrible Judgments, which break in on persons and places otherwise. The filthy lust of some of the *Benjamites*, made foul work amongst their Tribe. Their burning-lusts ended in the burning of their City: see *Judg.* 19. 25. with *Judg.* 20. 40.

Thirdly, By way of prevention. Though men have a seed-plot of sin in their hearts, yet some of the seeds at some times lye there as dead. So in *Exod.* 34. 24. *I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.* God hath variety of ways to hush and still the cry of Robbery, Spoil, and Cruelty. He who made the Soul of man, knows how to have access to the door of every affliction, and so to set a lock and key on it.

Fourthly, By way of inhibition. There are the stirrings of sin, but they are but stirrings. The shackles of restraint are clapt on by *Providence*. Lust hath conceived, but it bringeth not forth, to allude to that in *James* 1.15. The birth of the Project is an abortive. Now how *Providence* doth block up the lusts of men, so that though there be consultation and resolution, yet the design walks not abroad into the field, but is confined within doors, may call for our admiration rather than discussion. A comprehensive recital of the many ways which *Providence* hath to lay siege to the hearts of men, is not to be expected. It's not for a Cock-shell-understanding to take in the Ocean. A few drops then of that River which *Providence* cuts a channel or trench for the keeping in of sinners, so that they sally not out, and do that mischief which might be done, may here be put together, and that in the Vessel of the Sanctuary, I mean according to Scripture.

1. There is a way of inhibition, which I may term excentrical, or extraordinary. And that there is an inhibition, is clear; but how, is as dark to be understood. He who formeth the spirit of man within him, *Zech.* 12. 1. can and doth byass it as he pleaseth. The Lord hath secret and immediate accesses to the hearts of men.

2. There is a way which is more ordinary, as in some measure apprehended or understood by men. And this way whereby God doth often inhibit sin, is by some impressions or other, which are made on the spirits of men. And

here

here it may be observed, (1.) An impression is made by the light of Nature, being blown up into a flame at such an instant by some common work of God. The Heathens *having not a law, were a law to themselves*, Rom. 2. 14. They were Heathens who shewed no little kindness, *Act.* 28. 2. they did not knock the shipwrack't persons in the head, but their compassion was drawn forth towards them. (2.) An impression is sometimes made by means of a conviction of a party's honesty or innocency, against whom fury was armed. *David* gives *Saul* to understand, that he was no such Malecontent and enemy to him, as he was traduced by a pack of Claw-backs and Sycophants about *Saul*: he lets him know, as a demonstration of his good affection to *Saul*, That he had opportunity to have killed his Majesty; but far was it from him to do so, though near enough to have done so: far, in a moral sense; near, in a local sense. And hereupon saith *Saul*, *I have sinned: return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly*, 1 Sam. 26. 21.

3. An impression is made by reason of fear; and that (1.) From the Laws or Constitutions of the Countrey where persons live. The Gallows, more than Conscience, is a Lion in the sinner's way. Good Laws in a Nation, are the hedg and fence which keep off many a wild beast from making a prey on others; they who are lions couchant, would be Lions rampant otherwise. *Take heed what thou dost* (said the Centu-

Centurion to the chief Captain, of *Paul*) *for this man is a Roman*, Acts 22.26. (2.) From the displeasure of friends and relations. Some would keep up a greater friendship with some sins, were it not that their friends smiles would be turned into frowns. *Micah* continues not on his theft, but makes peace with his Mother, whom he had wronged, and whose curse he feared, *Judg.* 17. 1, 2, 3. (3.) From remarkable instances or examples of Divine severity. God in his *Providence* singles out some in a way of punishment, and so they become a terror to others. *Ananias* and *Saphira* are struck dead; *great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things*, Acts 5. 11. In some places, where people have not had such means of illumination by the full and clear opening of the Scriptures; yet there is a shaking at a distance from some sins, even to a wonder. And what is the bridle, but remarkable punishments which have befallen Adulterers, Murderers, and Perjured persons, and the like? There is much of a Catechizing *Providence* to be observed this way. (4.) From what may after be repaid home by parties themselves, or their friends, in case persons take not wit in their anger against such. *David* wills *Saul's* Courtiers to leave off their lying insinuations, as is probable in *Psal.* 4.2. the wind might set at another point, and then what becomes of them? *Gideon* tells *Zebah* and *Zalmunna*, They (who were slain by them at *Tabor*) *were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay*

you,

…, Judg. 8. 18, 19. Some are awed this way, as *Gideon*'s ſpeech may imply, though others are not. *Abner* had a ſenſe of this in that ſpeech of his to *Aſahel*, *Turn thee aſide* (ſaid he) *from following me*; *wherefore ſhould I ſmite thee to the ground? how then ſhould I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?* 2 Sam. 2. 22.

Fifthly, *Providence* bears down ſin by way of limitation. The Lord ſets bounds unto the raging ſea of corruption. An arm of it flows in, and it is but an arm; righteouſly ſo permitted, and yet wiſely limited by the hand of God. *Achitophel*'s counſel takes effect in *Abſalom*'s defiling his father's Concubines, 2 *Sam.* 6. 21. *Providence* herein makes good the truth of the word ſpoken, 2 *Sam.* 12. 11. Howbeit, *Achitophel*'s counſel takes not in purſuing after *David*, 2 Sam. 17. 14. *Shimei* had malice enough in his heart to have ſtain'd his hands with the blood of a good King, by way of aſſaſſination; but he only rails, and throws ſtones at *David* and his ſervants, 2 *Sam.* 16, 6, 7.

Sixthly, By way of detection, which puts a ſtop ſometimes in ſome caſes. *Eſau* hated *Jacob*, and ſaid, *The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I ſlay my brother Jacob*; *and theſe words of Eſau her elder ſon, were told Rebekah*, Gen. 27. 41, 42. *Jacob* hereupon is ſent away from his father's houſe, v. 43, 44, 45. but more of this in the next Obſervation.

Seventhly, By way of regulation, or converting even the ſins of men to a good uſe. As there is a myſtery of iniquity; ſo there is a myſtery of *Providence* in and about ſin

sin. Physicians know how to make use of a Viper for the good of their Patients. The All-wise God knows how to make use of the Vipers of the world, with their venom. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 76. 10.

Eighthly, By way of destruction, (1.) Of the Power of men. (2.) Of Men in power. It may be observed how the ability to hurt is broken, absolutely, or comparatively. *Shebna* the Treasurer is to be discarded, *Isa.* 22. 19. *Arise, O Lord*, (saith the *Psalmist*) *for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek, thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly*, Psal. 3. 7. *Providence* hands them a shaming-blow, for that seems to be meant by smiting on the cheek. They are box't and kick't to their disgrace. Their teeth are broken; and no need to fear their teethless jaws. Or if they are not formally or properly so broken, yet equivalently. Suppose they have Power, Wealth, with Malice enough; yet all avails not, for they are check't by a greater Power. Thus the Decree of *Darius* for building the Temple, silenceth whatever prejudices and hatred might be amongst the under-officers of the King, *Ezra* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Hither may be referred inflicted diseases, as hereby men are more or less disabled or incapacitated for the commission of sin, *Gen.* 20. 6, 17.

Again, As *Providence* destroys the Power of men, so Men in power. When men become monstrous in sinning, 'tis no wonder if God become prodigious in punishing. *Providence* con-

sults

sults the good of Societies of men, in making those to breathe their last, who have made others to groan under their insolent Oppressions, or oppressing Insolencies.

There are three ways how *Providence* bears down sin by bearing down the sinner to his grave:

1. By his own hands. The Lord arms sinners judicially against themselves. They become their own Executioners. *Achitophel* hangs himself, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23. So *Judas* too, *Mat.* 27. 5.

2. By the hands of others. One wild beast gores another to death. *Belshazzar* is slain, and *Darius* the *Median* took the Kingdom, *Dan.* 5. 30, 31.

3. By a more immediate hand of God. Dead they are; and a Jury say something, by saying nothing as to any visible-creature-hand by which death came. God who gave life, hath many ways to take what is given. He hath his Quiver full of Arrows. Not only a silent Arrow, but a sudden one, doth execution. Psal. 64. 7. *God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. LEARN to whom the glory of bearing up the World, is due. God's *Providence* is the true *Atlas* which supports the World, that doth shoulder up the World, whilst it treads on sin and sinners. Upon a serious view taken of *Providence* on this wise displayed, we may say as they said, *The Lord he is the God; the Lord he is the God*, 1 King. 18. 39.

2. Observe an Argument to confirm the truth of God's *Providence* in governing the World, from the restraints put upon sin and sinners in the World. The restraints do then bespeak the more remarkable hand of God, (1.) When parties restrain'd have power in their hand. A wonder it was, that none of *Pharaoh*'s Life-guard did not knock in the head those saucy and busie fellows *Moses* and *Aaron*, as they were look't on in the judgment of the Court, *Exod.* 5. 4, 5. (2.) When there is an old grudg against parties. Anger becomes canker'd malice; and yet the Canker eats no farther. As in *Esau*'s inveterate hatred against *Jacob*, *Gen.* 37. 41. with *Gen.* 33 (3.) When God shall step in in a nick of time, and clap on the shackles of restraint. *The God of your fathers* (said *Laban* to *Jacob*) *spake unto me yester-night, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad*, Gen. 31. 29. so in *Esau*'s case, who comes forth against *Jacob* with his four hundred men, *Gen.* 32. 6. (4.) When the

the Dogs are not only muzled, but shall fawn upon the Children. *Esau* ran to meet *Jacob*, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept, *Gen.* 33. 4. God in his *Providence* doth wonderfully affect the hearts of Aliens from Religion, so as they are kind to the religious. *Tatnai* and *Sethar-bozni*, are not as the former Officers, *Ezra* 5. compared with chap. 4.

Nostro quoque tempore factum est interdum, ut præfecti, alieni à nostra religione, melius se gesserint erga Evangelicos, quam illi ipsi, qui eandem nobiscum doctrinam professi sunt. *Innoc.* in lib. Eld. Homil. 16.

3. Have recourse to the great God in prayer, for the bearing down of sinners. The Lord hath two Bitts; the golden-one of Regenerating-grace, and the iron-one of Restraints. *Stephen* prays, and *Paul* is converted, *Acts* 7. 60. with *Acts* 9. *Hezekiah* prays, and he hath tidings of an iron Bit: there is an hook for the nose, and a bridle for the lips of a menacing and thundering *Senacherib*, 2 *Kings* 19. 14, 15. with 28.

4. Take thankful-notice of God's restraining-*Providence*. (1.) The neglect may provoke God to let slip the Bridle of Restraint. The Lord may teach the worth of a Mercy by the want of the said Mercy. If the Lord do but hiss for the Fly of *Egypt*, and for the Bee of *Assyria*, they quickly come to the annoyance of people, who were before free from annoyance, *Isa.* 7. 18, 19, 20. (2.) There is much of God to be seen in the restraint of persons. This

Jewel

Jewel is worthy of more than a single cast of the eye. Saints owe their Estates, Lives, to restraining-*Providence*. *Jacob* could see the face of God in the face of his brother *Esau*, Gen. 33. 10.

5. Secure a share in Regenerating-grace. For, (1.) This is the kernel and cream of blessings. Without Grace a man is but a tame Devil at the best. Corn, and Wine, and Oil, make men jolly; but it's the light of God's countenance which makes truly glad, *Psal.* 4. 7. (2.) He who hath Regenerating-*Providence* for his portion, will not be without a large share in Restraining-*Providence* for his protection. *I will (saith David) both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety*, Psal. 4. 8.

Undè etiam justi taberna, tygurium & tentorium ad omnem adversam & noxiam vim propulsandam, plus virium habet, quam improborum robustissimum & firmissimum palatium, arces, propugnacula; justorum papyracei parietes improborum ferreis & æneis; illorum straminea lectorum integumenta, horum laminis ac tegulis; illorum ligamina, horum seris & pessulis. *Cartw.* in *Prov.* p. 623.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXI.

PROVIDENCE is the Bird of the Air, which whistles deeds of darkness to light.

CHAP. I.

BEFORE, was shewed how *Providence* bears down sin in the world; and one way, amongst others, was by way of detection or discovery. Hereby, sin intended, is sometimes prevented; as the killing of *Paul* by certain of the Jews, who had banded together to do the fact, *Acts* 23. 12, *&c.* Hereby some are made examples of shame, that so others may be deterred from giving way to like abominations, as in *Ananias* and *Saphira*'s case; *great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things*, Acts 5. 11. *Providence* then is very remarkable in the dis-vizzarding men; and this appears two ways:

1. From express and implied assertions, or cautions bottomed on assertions. Job 12. 22. *He discovereth deep things out of darkness: and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.* And Eccles. 10. 20. *Curse not the King, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.* So

Luke 8. 17. *For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.*

2. From Exemplifications; which may be distinguish't according to deeds of darkness, which are so termed; as sin within is compared to darkness, and Satan the Prince of darkness, are both Mother and Nurse to such deeds in the general: But more particularly, and to the matter in hand, in regard of secrecy, as affecting the dark, *Ephes.* 5. 11, 12. These deeds of darkness do respect the first Table and second, in a way of violation of duties commanded. Now each of these sorts of deeds of darkness are brought to light.

1. Examples there are of the first sort. Our first Parents sinned against God in eating the forbidden fruit; the Lord himself plays the *Anatomist*, and lays open the bowels of that fact, *Gen.* 3. 8. *&c.* *Achan*'s transgressing the Covenant, is found out, *Josh.* 7. 11, 17, 18, 19, 20. *Judas* his Hypocrisie ends in notorious Apostatie, *Mat.* 26. 14, 15. *Ananias* and *Sapphira*'s Sacriledg hath the Curtain drawn from before it, by the hand of *Peter*, *Acts* 5. *Simon Magus* his Sorceries and painted Atheisms are unmasked, *Acts* 8.

2. Examples of the later sort there are likewise. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it,* Prov. 30. 17. *Cain*'s murdering his brother *Abel*, is found out by the Lord, *Gen.* 4. 8, 9, 10. *Judah*'s Uncleanness hath a Signet, and Bracelet,

let, and Staff, to discover it, *Gen.* 38.16,24,25. *Joseph* was stoln out of the Land of the *Hebrews*, as it is said *Gen.* 40.15. the Plagiarism or Theft of the Brethren is laid open. The wicked forgery and perjury in the case of *Naboth*, is left on record, 1 *King.* 21. These instances of both sorts may suffice. It were easie to enlarge here from History. I pass to the accommodation or improvement.

CHAP. II.

1. OBSERVE an Argument to prove *Providence*, from the wonderful discoveries which are made of the deeds of darkness. Though all deeds of darkness do not come to light in this world; yet this may suffice, Divers do: some are discovered to prove a *Providence*; others reserved from a discovery, to intimate a day of general Judgment. There are several Observables, which, if they are seriously considered, do abundantly commend to us the *Providence* of God in matters of this nature.

1. The small and various threads on which a discovery doth sometimes hang. Unless the hand of *Providence* did fasten these together, and keep them from being broken, the sinner had not been drawn out of his Dungeon by them. How many windings and turnings were there of *Providence*, ere the horrid fact of *Joseph's* brethren comes to their father's knowledg?

2. The long distance of time sometimes between the perpetration of some fact, and the discovery of it. One would think such or such a deed of darkness were dead, buried, and never like to rise again in this world. There were divers years past ere *Joseph*'s brethren were taken to task by *Providence* in order to a discovery. I could instance in a woman who liv'd thirty years after a Murder committed; and the House where she liv'd being after to be altered, in regard it was not convenient for the making of Gunpowder, being twice blown up; in digging, bones were found: and the Woman, who had changed her habitation, was apprehended, and convicted out of her own confession.

3. The notable sagacity and quick-sightedness of some who are concerned to search into matters. There is sometimes much of *Providence* to be noted. Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out, *Prov.* 20. 5. In the controversie of the Harlots about the living-child, *Solomon*'s Judgment was more sharp than his Sword, 1 *King.* 3. 16, to the end.

4. Angelical Ministry, which *Providence* doth often use in order to discoveries. *Joseph* is warned by an Angel of the Lord, how *Herod* had a design to murder Christ, *Mat.* 2. 13. I make no question, but the Angels who cover their faces before the Almighty, do invisibly uncover many a deed of darkness. They are the Intelligencers in matters of this nature. And though they do not appear in places of Judicature,

cature, yet they may assist there, and promote (invisibly) Discoveries. I have heard of one who had an Apparition, which willed him to accuse a certain party of Murder committed; and withal, bid the man ask certain questions; and in case the proof did not take, the Spirit would appear in the place of Judicature: On the rumour of this, a great concourse there is of people to behold the Apparition; and out of the Croud, Witnesses are found to evince the murderous fact; for the questions referring to the Murder, as going through such an hedg, washing his shooes at such a place, being denied, some there did on the contrary attest, being thus providentially drawn together with others; and so the Judg condemns the man, not because of the Apparition, but upon proof made *secundum allegata & probata*.

5. The variety of ways which *Providence* hath to lay open the deeds of darkness. *Providence* doth sometimes blow off the paint by the warm breath of the guilty parties themselves. Their own consciences, words, carriages, witness the evils committed. *Many came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds*, Acts 19. 18, 19. Again, sometimes by the breath of others, who if they were not Associates, yet were some way or other privy to such deeds. A *Jehu* tells stories of *Ahab*'s Court, and what past before, 2 *King.* 9. 25, 26.

Moreover, *Providence* doth make good the charge against the guilty, sometimes by some one single demonstrative or passage. *Tamar*

ſends a greeting to her father, ſaying, *By the man whoſe theſe are, am I with child*, Gen. 38.25. Again, ſometime by a concurreney of matters. A bundle of ſticks is not broken, though taken apart they are eaſily ſnapt aſunder. *Providence* is wonderful, in bringing forth the ſeveral links of the Chain, which pull the Guilty out of their cloſe Coverts, to their bluſh and confuſion of face.

2. Give not way to Abominations upon preſumption of ſecrecy. It is folly, and a deluſion of Satan, to conſent to temptations, becauſe of ſecrecy.

1. Suppoſe the guilts of ſome eſcape the eye of men in this world, Art thou ſure that thine ſhall? The Lord ſeeth all, and may give others to ſee what thou doſt. *And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the ſorcerers, and againſt the adulterers, and againſt falſe ſwearers, and againſt thoſe that oppreſs the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherleſs, and that turn aſide the ſtranger from his right, and fear not me, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts*, Mal. 3.5. And *Pſal.* 44. 21. *Shall not God ſearch this out? for he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart.*

2. There is an heavy judgment on parties, in their uncontrollable liberty which they take in the Vaults of darkneſs. The hand of *Providence* lies heavy on them in a judiciary way, whilſt the finger of *Providence* doth not point out to the world their ſins, for which they might take an holy ſhame, and amend. 'Twas a

mercy

mercy to *David*, that *Nathan* was sent to him, 2 *Sam.* 12. with *Psal.* 51. On the other hand, *Providence* doth punish, when it doth not punish, *Hos.* 4. 14. To go on in the broad-way to destruction without check, is the suburbs of damnation.

3. A day will come when all will out before Angels and Men. In *Rom.* 2. 16. *In the day when God shall judg the secrets of men according to my Gospel.* And 1 Cor. 4. 5. *Therefore judg nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.* To this of the Apostle, add what *Solomon* hath as pertinent for a period here; and oh that it might put a period to further deeds of darkness: *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man: for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,* Eccles. 12. 13, 14.

OBSERVATION XXII.

PROVIDENCE runs parallel with the line of man's life: Or, Providence *reacheth from the Grave of the Womb, to the Womb of the Grave.*

CHAP. I.

AS there is a general inspection of God over all the Creatures, as hath been before shewed: so there is a more special over Man, the Flower of the Creation, next to Angels. And this more special Inspection, Care, or Providence, is co-extensive to the life of man; which may be evidenced from the Scripture, as followeth.

1. It is plainly and positively asserted. *The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men from the place of his habitation. He fashioneth their hearts alike: he considereth all their works,* Psal. 33. 13, 14, 15. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven, a time to be born, and a time to dye, &c.* Eccles. 3. 1. See *Mat.* 10. 29, 30, 31.

Cœlum non est otiosum palatium. sed Dei regia, e quâ Imperium suum per omnes mundi partes cum summâ ratione & sapientiâ exercet. *Mollerus.*

1. It's acknowledged by the Lord's people in their addresses to him. *But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mothers breast: I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mothers belly*, Psal. 22. 9, 10. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works: now also when I am old, and gray-headed, O God forsake me not*, Psal. 71. 17, 18.

3. Otherwise that Principle of undoubted Verity, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28. would expire before man breathe out his last. If there be not a constant motion of *Providence* from life to death, the sense must be, In him we live not, move not, and have not our being.

4. The Scripture descends particularly, (1.) To the Actions of man. (2.) To what befalls man, and that by way of reference to the *Providence* of God;

First, The Actions of man fall under a threefold consideration:

1. As Natural, as eating, drinking, walking, talking, sleeping, these are subjected to the *Providence* of God. They are like to make but a poor meal, who have both mouths and meat, if they find not grace in the eyes of the Lord. *While the flesh was yet between the teeth of the Israelites, yet it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people*, Numb. 11. 33. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps*, Jer. 10. 23. *But I will come*

shortly

shortly to you, if the Lord will, 1 Cor. 4. 19. *The answer of the tongue is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. *On that night could not the King sleep*, Esth. 6. 1. *For so he giveth his beloved sleep*, Psal. 137. 2.

2. As Civil or Political; such are ploughing, buying, selling---It is said of the Husbandman, *his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him*, Isa. 28. 26. The Apostle *James* reads to buyers and sellers a good and savoury lecture; he willeth them to eye *Providence*; for though they are Masters of their own Trade, yet not Masters of their own Lives; and what becomes of the intentional bargains then in a moment? yea, of what they have gotten through succeeding *Providence*, when they are swept away by death, which proves at times the death of their Wealth, their Estates, and Affairs, lying raw and undigested, and being left in the hands of Fools, or Knaves? See *James* 4. 13, 14, 15.

3. As Moral; and that whether good or bad. As for actions good; no man, unless he forget himself to be a man, will appropriate that to himself as a Fountain, of which he is but a Cistern: *for who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. See *James* 1. 17. And as for actions bad, which are vulgarly so termed; though *Providence* be not an author of them, yet it is a spotless actor in and about them: the foul acts in a man's lame-foot, and yet laments it

is not chargeable on the soul. God is an holy God, notwithstanding the displays of *Providence* in and about the Sins of men, as hath elsewhere been discovered.

Secondly, What befalls man, is reducible to the *Providence* of God. Not only the Honey, but the Gall of man's life, hath its being from Him. *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things*, Isa. 45. 7. *Job*, in that Doxology of his, acknowledgeth this, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*, Job 1. 21.

CHAP. II.

1. LOOK back how *Providence* hath dealt with thee in time past. *Jacob* did so, as is left on record, *Gen.* 48. *Moses*, the Man of God, in the book of *Deuteronomy*, which may may be termed the book of *Moses* Farewel-Sermons, preach't a Month before his death (as some observe), doth commend to the *Israelites* a survey of God's *Providence* towards them; he willeth them particularly to take a view both of Mercies and Afflictions. *Thy raiment* (saith he) *waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years: thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee*, Deut. 8. 4, 5.

2. Take encouragement for time to come, to trust in God. Some are miserably baffled with

with temptations for futurity; How shall they do! What may befall them, and the like! here is both an Antidote and a Remedy against this Disease. *Providence* runs parallel with the line of life; and this may quiet and compose the spirit, if well thought on and improved. But more particularly consider here three things.

1. *Providence* is not tired. It is a mighty Giant, not wearied with half-racing. *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary,* Isa. 40. 28.

2. The experience of an hitherto-*Providence*, may sweetly invite to wait on God for futurity. So *David* reasoneth, *Thou art my Lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness. for by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall,* 2 Sam. 22. 29, 30. So *Paul* too, 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.

3. The Promises are not empty breasts. There is enough in them to keep faith from starving. Remember that, Heb. 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXIII.

There are the signal Sallies, remarkable Excursions or Displays of Providence, *as they respect the sons of men in the course of life.*

CHAP. I.

BEFORE was shewed, how *Providence* runs hand in hand, as it were, with man, from the Cradle to the Crutch of old age; a Race there is from the birth, even to death. Here now something offers it self to be spoken unto as remarkable in this Race; and this is termed forth under the notions of *signal Sallies, remarkable Excursions*, or *Displays of Providence*: And that there are such *Sallies, Excursions*, &c. appears,

From God's manner of appearing to, and for, the Patriarchs of old. There were some certain and eminent seasons for such appearances. So *Noah* had a discovery to make an Ark when the Flood was to be brought, *Gen.* 6. 13, 14. *Abraham* experienceth solemn visits of *Providence*, Gen. 12. 1, 7. *Gen.* 13. 14. *Gen.* 14. 13. with *Isa.* 41. 2. *Gen.* 15. 1. *Gen.* 17. 1. *Gen.* 18. 1. *Gen.* 21. 12. *Gen.* 22. As God did appear to him, so for him, and that wonderfully, according as his case was: so *Gen.* 20. 3.

Psal.

Psal. 105. 14. Others, as *Jacob*, *Joseph*, *Moses*, might be instanced in, whose lives are recorded in the Scriptures; and passages to this purpose in their lives are obvious, and may be touched in the following discourse, and therefore I forbear further amplification.

2. From Promises, which do seminally contain such signal Sallies, Excursions, or Displays of *Providence*. Such as the Tree, such the fruit. If there be a promise to *Abraham*, That God will give his posterity a visit in *Egypt*, as *Gen.* 15. 14. what follows, but as is said *Psal.* 80. 8. *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt*. Are there Promises referring to Spirituals and Temporals? Accordingly will be the Displays of *Providence*, as shall make most for God's glory, and the good of parties who are concerned in such promises.

3. From the Attributes of God, the glory whereof in an eminent manner the Lord consults at some seasons. All the *Israelites* nights were not nights of observation, in comparison of that night when the starrs of God's Attributes did so gloriously shine in their going forth from *Egypt*, Exod. 12. 41, 42. So in *Isa.* 102 16. *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory*. There are seasons for the Lord's Attributes to have on their Festival Robes.

4. From the object-matter of such Sallies, Excursions, or Displays of *Providence*. The object may be considered in regard of temporals and spirituals. The *Providence* of God, like a glorious Sun, casts its beam on each of these.

these. We may here consider the Sallies of *Providence* according to the subsequent miscellaneous order.

First, There are the Nativity-Cradle-Minority-Dispensations. *Thou art he that took me out of the womb*, saith the *Psalmist*, Psal. 22. 9. He doth not use the Midwife, though she might be the ministring-Instrument. *Benjamin* is born, and his Mother dyes: when he comes into the world, his Mother goes out, *Gen.* 35. 18, 19. *Moses* is born when a bloody-Statute was on foot against the Males of the *Israelites*: there was an Ark of *Providence* as well as an Ark of Bullrushes for his preservation. A conjunction there was of many gracious acts of *Providence*, as well as an artificial conjunction of the Bullrushes, as the story declares, *Exod.* 2. Our Saviour Christ in his minority as man, had an help of *Providence* set about him to keep off a pushing and goring-*Herod*, Mat. 2. 13. That eminent servant of God *Peter Du Moulin*, was wonderfully preserved, being a little one in the time of the *Parisian* Massacre. The murthering *Papists* shall not stop the breath of him who must live to serve God with his Tongue, and cut the throat of the *Popish* Cause with his Pen.

Utq; mirabili Dei Providentiâ quando puer ad necem quæreberis, inhorrenda clade *Bartholomæi*, servatus ancillæ maximè industria fuisti. Doct. *Hornbeck*, Sum. Controv. Epist. Dedic. ad *Molin.*

Secondly, There are some signal Sallies of *Providence* with respect to the Calling or Employment of parties. So in *Joseph*, who is a None-such

such for wisdom and trust in *Pharaoh*'s eye, Gen. 41. 38, 39, 40. *Amos* relates the story of God's *Providence* in his call to the Lord's work, and that after a signal sort, *Amos* 7. 14, 15. Wonderful is the *Providence* of God, sometimes in a strong byassing of a Parent's spirit to intend such or such a Child for the Sacred Ministry, otherwhiles the *Providence* of God is wonderful, in so wheeling matters, as that a Child otherwise intended, is like the *Flower-de-luce* in the Mariners Card, in motion, till it settle towards the North-pole. The Lord will find a way, or make one, to the Pulpit, or Professors chairs of Divinity. *Junius* was designed for a Court-life; his Father was willing his Son should be godly, but not a Preacher of godliness; but yet he is both: for so it fell out, that before a supplicatory Letter sent from the Son in order to his abiding longer at *Geneva*, comes to the hands of the Father, his Father was slain by the hands of the Popish-party in a tumult, as that eminent servant of the Lord doth declare in the History of his own Life.

Thirdly, There are remarkable Displays of *Providence* with respect to some particular Affairs and Negotiations of persons; and that,

1. By way of prospering them. Thus *Abraham*'s servant in that clause of his prayer, *O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go*, intimates, *Gen.* 24. The Lord was with *Joseph*, and he was a prosperous man, and he was in the house of his Master the *Egyptian*, and his Master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made

all

all that he did, prosper in his hand, *Gen.*39.2,3. *David* behaved himself wisely, and the Lord was with him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 14. *The seventy* (Disciples) *returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even Devils are subject unto us through thy name*, Luke 10. 17. *The hand of the Lord was with them* (who were scattered by reason of persecution), *and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord*, Acts 11. 21. *For I* (saith Paul) *will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ*, Rom. 15. 18, 19.

Ita mihi omnibus in rebus, omnibusque modis adfuit Christus ut etiamsi nunc velim, tamen dicere non possim, quod per me non effecerit ut gentes Evangelio obedirent. *Beza* ad locum.

2. By way of crossing them, and cursing too, as the Lord sees fit. *And in those times* (when *Israel* for a long season had been without the true God, and without a teaching-Priest, and without the Law) *there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countreys; and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city; for God did vex them with all adversity*, 2 Chron. 15. 3, 5, 6. *Why* (said *Zechariah* to the people) *transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you*, 2 Chron. 24. 20. They were, in the Prophet *Haggai*'s time, for their Cieled Houses,

and neglected the House of the Lord; and what saith the Prophet? *Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes*, Hag. 1.4,6. *Sculterus* reports a memorable passage of *Ferdinand* the Emperor, who, when battels were unhappily fought, said (being very sad) to his Councellors: I wonder how it comes to pass that all my designs fall out very unhappily! To him one of *Austria* couragiously replies, saying, That which in all ages happens to Kings and Emperors, the same, O Emperor, happens to thee, Call to mind the History of the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, and thou shalt find, that for their spilling human blood, and winking at sins; grievous enemies by Divine Judgment were stirred up, whom they were not able to resist. If at any time they did purpose to fight the enemy, they fought unhappily. Neither therefore mayest thou expect any other fortune, unless thou desist from thy purpose in oppugning Religion. Thus he to *Ferdinand*. And it would be well then, when persons meet with clashing-excursions of *Providence* (a series, or chain of them) they would think on that of *Rebeccah*, *If it be so, why am I thus? and she went and enquired of the Lord*, Gen. 25,22. Or that of *Jeremiah*, *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord*, Lam. 3.40.

Annal. Dec. 2. p. 393.

Fourthly, There are the signal Sallies of *Providence* in regard of Marriages. *House and riches*

are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord, Prov. 19. 14. What is said of a prudent Wife, doth by a rational proportion hold of a prudent Husband; both are from the Lord by way of a signal Dispensation of *Providence*; and are so, comparatively, before Riches and Inheritance.

Non quod domus, &c. simpliciter & pure non sit etiam Dei donum deinde quod maconsecutione. jus quædam & oculatior sit Dei in Uxorum piarum Providentia, quam in hæreditatis consequendæ ratione. *Carw.*

More particularly, there are four things here observable:

1. The party or parties considered. This man, and not another, notwithstanding (it may be sometimes) probabilities in regard of another; and so this woman, and not another, and that though born and bred at a distance, *Ruth* 1. 16. with *Ruth*. 4 6. 10.

2. The occasion, way, or means, how brought together. *Moses* flies into the land of *Midian*, and there he marries *Zipporah*, see *Exod.* 2, 21. *Ruth* was drawn off from her own Countrey; and in the way of pious and industrious poverty, ascends from a Gleaner in the field, to be the Mistris in the house; see *Ruth* 2. There is a wonderful connexion of things, by way of an introduction to marriage of parties, to be observed sometimes.

3. The time when some (at least) enter on this state of Matrimony. Some who seem to pass the flower of their age, meet with a good Match. Delays of *Providence* are recompenced with the comfortable returns of *Providence*.

Isaac had a good Wife in *Rebeccah*, and it is said of him, he was forty years old when he took *Rebeccah*. Though the like age be not now required, in regard they were longer-liv'd in that age of the world; yet it were well if persons would play the *Isaacs*, be pious, solid, know the duties of a married estate, before marriage. No wonder if Christ be not at the Weddings of some, when Mammon, Pride, Rashness, Discontent of heart, and the like, lead the Bride to Church.

Rari sunt quibus non obrepant fastidia uxorum. *Calv.*

4. The wonderful sympathy and consonancy of affection between parties, and that though there are other men and other women, which in regard of beauty, parts, and wealth, may rather commend them. The two are one flesh (*Gen* 2. 24.) not only in regard of the Lord's Institution, but love and affection, for the main kept up. To these things may be added the signal displays of *Providence* in regard of Children, the fruit of Marriage. There is a remark display of *Providence* sometimes in not having them. So *Jer.* 22.30. *Thus saith the Lord, Write this man childless*, &c. And there is, on the other hand, as remark display in the having of them; as in *Sarah* having an *Isaac*, Gen. 18 14. *Hannah* a *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 1.20. with *ch.* 2. *Elizabeth* a *John the Baptist*, Luke 1.13. with 18.

Fifthly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in order to the conversion of parties to God, or goodness. *Paul* makes a narrative how the good Shepherd brought home the lost sheep, *Acts* 26. He declares there what he was by nature,

ture, and what he is by grace. He who was the High-Priest's Blood-hound, becomes a Lamb of Christ's Fold. Free-grace was eminently displayed in his conversion; for the very time of his rage and madness against the people of God, was the time of God's dropping grace into his heart. Christ then planted him on *Zion*'s ground, when he intended to root up Christians. Here I might insist on, (1.) The occasion, means remote and near. (2.) The time when. (3.) The manner how *Providence* is conversant about the calling home of parties. But this might prove too large an Excursion in this place.

Sixthly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of mortification-work, or progress in the ways of God. The House of the *Christian* is not built as soon as the foundation is laid. There is *growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, required, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. How the Lord doth promote this work, may in brief be touched in three things:

1. By way of discovery of slips and sinful imprudencies, even after conversion. Even a *David* needs a *Nathan* to alarum him, 2 *Sam.* 12. and though some do not fall so foully as *David* did, in regard of heinous sins; yet the sinful imprudencies after conversion, are matter for humiliation. The breakings forth of spiritual pride, rashness, censoriousness, and such like evils, unto which young Converts or weak Christians are incident, have a day of reckoning in the Court of *Providence*. The brighter and clearer the Sun breaks in at the Window,

the better is discerned a small object, as a pin on the ground. At first, when the Christian's Sun did not shine so clear, he discerned grosser evils; but now he comes to behold more inward and spiritual evils.

2. By exercising them with variety of conditions. These Soldiers know what it is to be in garison, and what it is to be in the field. They have had both calms and storms on the Sea of this World. Witnesses hereof, are *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Moses*, *David*, *Job*, *Paul*, with others. These had their divers temptations or trials, as is said *James* 1. 2.

3. By quickning them to the use of means, in order to progress. *As new born babes, desire ye the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*, said *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 2 2. The Spouse seeketh him whom her soul loveth, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, And for her spiritual laziness and drowsiness, Christ had withdrawn himself; and then she is the more secretly stirred up to seek after him, *Can.* 3, 5, 6, 7, 8. Pertinent to this, is that of *Jude's* direction for progress; *But ye beloved, building up your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your selves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life*, Jude v. 20, 21.

Seventhly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of Temptations which befall persons. There are certain buffeting seasons when Satan is let loose, and that not without a wise and righteous hand of God. Thus in *David's* numbring the people, 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. with 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. It is said, *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit*

rit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, Mat. 4. 1. And as there is a buffeting-season, so there is a relieving sally of *Providence* more than ordinary, when the temptation is so. *The Lord said unto Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*, Luke 22. 31, 32. Though *Peter* fell, and that foully; yet, as he fell by his rising too high in his own confidence, *v.* 33. so he rises from his falling, *v.* 62. and by his falling; for he becomes a more humble Christian afterwards, *Job.* 21. 15, 16, 17. To this instance of *Peter*, add that of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8, 9.

Eighthly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of Calamities. These are not the birth of Heathenish Fortune or Chance. *See now* (saith God) *that I, even I, am he; and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand*, Deut. 31. 39. The black Horse, and the red Horse, and the pale Horse, *Rev.* 6. were (if I may so phrase it) sadled in the Stable of *Providence*, ere *Providence* rid circuit in way of Judgment on them. *Divine Providence* may be stiled the Master of these Horses; for upon the opening of the seals, away gallop these Horses, that is, wrathful Dispensations, to take place in the World, according to the Contents of the sealed Book there.

Ninthly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of external Mercies, of which, persons are in an eminent way made the subjects of. There is a plain stamp on this Coin, the image

or superscription of *Providence* is very legible. *Abimilech*, and *Pichol* the chief Captain of his Army, come to *Isaac*, and said, *We saw certainly that the Lord is with thee*, &c. *Gen.*26.28,29. It is said of *David*, *He went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him.* *Hiram*, King of *Tyrus*, sends messengers to him; yea, he perceived that the Lord had established him King over *Israel*, and that he had exalted his Kingdom for his people *Israel*'s sake, 2 *Sam.* 5. 10, 11, 12. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them*, Psal. 126. 1, 2.

Tenthly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of Habitation. *Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee*, Gen. 12. 1. *Jacob* hath a call to leave *Laban*, to be gone from him, whose countenance was not toward him as before, *Gen.* 31. 2,3. *Moses* must no longer keep the Flock of his Father *Jethro*; he must look after another Flock, the Lord's people, Exod. 3. 10. *Then spake Elisha to the woman (whose son he had restored to life) saying, Arise, and go thou and thy household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years*, 2 King 8. 1. *The Angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child, and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be*

thou

thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him, Mat. 2. 13. Thus there is a display of *Providence* in the change of Habitation; and they who change their places according as there is a warrant or rational ground so to do, have experience, that though they change their places, yet not their God. *Jacob*, though he left his Father's Family, yet met with his Father's God elsewhere, *Gen.* 28. 16.

Eleventhly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of Journeys. This is of some kin to the former, and yet a difference there is. The Bee goes abroad, yet keeps to the old Hive. Some are not so coop'd up at their accustomed homes, but there are occasions and rational inducements to be abroad. Now *Providence* is on its journey, whilst they are on theirs. A wonderful *Providence* there was in the journey of *Jacob*'s sons into *Egypt*, *Gen.* 42. 1, 2. They go down into *Egypt* for Corn, and so the Sheaf-dream is fulfilled, and they are there threshed from their chaff, *v.* 9, and 21. *Joseph* by a good *Providence* is found by a man, when behold he was wandring in the field, *Gen.* 37. 15, 16, 17. *Moses* in his journey to *Egypt*, meets with a startling *Providence*, *Exod.* 4. 24. *Elisha* in his journey at *Shunem*, meets with courteous entertainment, 2 *Kings* 4. 8, 9, 10. *Ezra*'s journey of Prayer, proves a journey of *Providence*, *Ezra* 8. 21, 23. It is said of Christ, he must go thorow *Samaria*, *John* 4. 4. As there might be reason for his going thorow *Samaria*, in regard of the situation of *Samaria*, that being

the

the way to the place intended; so there might be another reason, namely, his will for the conversion of the woman there, together with her neighbours, *v.* 39. Thus from these and the like Scriptures it may be evidenced, how there is much of *Providence* in journeys, and that both as to Temporals and Spirituals, Afflictions and Mercies. It's wisdom to take God along with one in journeys on earth, and to mind the great journey towards Heaven.

Twelfthly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of some glorious Discovery of God to the Soul by way of consolation. Every day is not in this sense a Christian's gaude-day. *Jacob* had a golden dream indeed, when in it, *Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee*, saith the Lord to him, *Gen.* 28. 15. That passage of signal *Providence* was never to be forgotten by *Jacob*; it was of use to him thorow his whole life: it was not an every-day's *Providence*, though he had experience of God's *Providence* every day. In 1 *Kings* 11. 9. God's appearing twice to *Solomon* is there taken notice of. *Paul* was caught up into the third Heaven, 2 *Cor.* 12. 2. I make no question but divers Saints of God have had somewhat like experience of God's out-goings towards their souls. There are some high-days of *Providence*, if I may so term them; and oh that such high-days (where and when they are) may not puff up persons.

Lastly, There are the sallies of *Providence* in regard of Death; and that as they respect,

1. The fore-running, warning, preparatory in-

intimations of Death. *Moses* and *Joshua* sang sweetly, like Swans, before their death. Christ observes that *Providence* in the woman's anointing his feet with ointment of Spikenard; *Let her alone* (said he to grumbling *Judas*): *against the day of my burying hath she kept this*, Joh. 12. 7.

It is recorded of Sir *Anthony Wingfield*, slain at *Brest* in *Britain*, in the year 1594, That at his last going into *Britain*, he so disposed of his Estate, as if he were never to return; and the same day, or day before his death, took such order for his debts, as if he had a presage of his end. Some have fore-told the day of their death: others have dropt such passages at times, when no visible signs of death then, as after have been better understood by their sorrowful Friends. Memorable service of English-Generals under Sir *John Norrice*. p. 46.

2. These Death-sallies respect the kind of death. The Lord takes some out of the world in way of Martyrdom, as *Stephen*, *Acts* 7. 59. *James*, *Acts* 12. 2. Others dye a natural death, and that notwithstanding all the attempts of men to the contrary. This was *Luther*'s case, who dies in his bed, do Emperor and Pope what they can to the contrary.

3. These Death-sallies respect assistance against Satan then. The Devil is busie then. I have always (saith a pious Divine) observed, that when Satan most tempteth the truly religious, they seldom recover that sickness: he hath great skill to discover how nature is weakned, and therefore taketh the fittest time for that purpose. It's reported of Mr. *Pemble*, how the Tempter assaulted him by way of Mr. *John Barlow* in his Ser. on *Psal* 73. 24. pag. 50.

syl-

syllogism on his death-bed, as was understood by *Pemble*'s denying sometimes the Major, other-whiles the Minor-Propposition. Our Saviour Christ, when the time of his Passion drew nigh, said to his Apprehenders, *This is your hour, and power of darkness*, Luke 22. 53. And what darts *Satan* shot at him in the bow of People, Soldiers, the Malefactor, may be understood, *Luke* 23. 34, to 40. As the temptations may be more than ordinary then, so are the sallies of *Providence* in a way of assistance. It is said in reference to Christ, when the bitter Cup was in his hand, there appeared an Angel from Heaven, strengthning him, *Luke* 22. 43. The Lord helps his people in shooting this gulph. They will be out of gun-shot in a little time, and Death will be the death of temptation. The Sheep shall not be pluck't out of Christ's hand, though Satan catch at them, *Joh.* 10. 28.

4. And lastly, These Death-sallies respect Comforts at death, which are dispenced after a more than ordinary sort to some, as in *Stephen*'s case, *Acts* 7. 55. The learned and pious *Rivet* in his last hours, seems to have had a taste of the Heavenly Inheritance, a first-hansel of Heaven, a dawning of the joyful day of Eternity. And thus far of the Sallies of *Providence* in regard of Death, and other matters, as hath been insisted on. The Improvement of such Sallies follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

OBSERVE and note well the Sallies of *Providence*. If Gold-filings are with care paper'd up, much more are the Wedges of Gold to be choicely laid up under Lock and Key. It is observable how there is a note of attention or observation prefixt to the Narratives of the Sallies of *Providence*, in the Sacred Scripture: see *Gen.*28.12. *Gen.*37.15. 1 *King.*14. 10. 2 *King.* 19. 7. *Psal.*78.20. *Acts* 10.19.

2. Be thankful to God for what share you have had in the signal Sallies of *Providence* on your behalf. Hath *Providence* stept in for thy help? holp up thy Cart when it was overturn'd, or suddenly supplied thee with a firm Wheel for a broken one? What remains now, but the celebrating the Name of God with *Hallelujahs*? The *Israelites* had their Song for that Sally at the Red-sea, *Exod.*15.1. We read of the Writing of *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness, *Isa.* 38. 9. *Paul* is affected with the Lord's delivering him out of the mouth of the Lion, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17.

3. Learn from the meditation of the Sallies of *Providence*, to trust God both for thy self and Relations. God's Saints have so done; their faith in running backward, hath fetch'd a leap forward. So *David* in 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. So *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 18. *Abraham* had an eye to the Sallies of *Providence* for his Son's marriage, *Gen.* 24. 6, 7. he useth the means, sends his servant on a Nup-

Nuptial-Embassie, and so acquiesceth in God's *Providence*. The Sallies of *Providence* on the behalf of Children, are the best portion. They who can leave little or nothing to Children, yet if they leave them an interest in the Sallies of Divine *Providence*, do leave them enough; what is wanting one way, these Sallies of *Providence* make up another way. Oh that Parents therefore would take less care, by taking more care, less care for the Earth, and more for Heaven! The way to have things go well, is for Parents and Children to have God for their God, or to be reallly godly. But of this in the next Meditation.

Nititur ergo *Abraham* promissione, & docet omnia gerenda esse in πληροτορίᾳ fidei, sive magnum, sive exile appareat. Sic nos quoque discamus Deo reddenda & committenda esse omnia, sive singularia, sive usitata, summa & infima, ut lætemur & fortes simus in Domino, omnem solicitudinem in eum projicientes. Videtur res sordida & obscœna propemodum apparare filio nuptias: sed in quanto pretio & honore est in oculis *Abrahæ*! adeo ut non dubitet de Angelorum præsentia, cura & præsidio. *Luth.* ad locum.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXIV.

PROVIDENCE hath its Courts, in which the ſons of men have their different ſtations.

CHAP. I.

AS in the Temple of old there were divers places appropriated to perſons; ſo in the great Houſe of *Providence*: ſome are the Children, and have their lodgings; others Servants and Scavengers, who though they have ſome relation to the Houſe, yet are not members of the Houſe comparatively with others. There are three Courts or Circles in which men may be conſidered.

1. There is the large and outmoſt Circle of common or general *Providence*: Here all men, the worſt of men, even the Pagan-Pagans, may be placed. *The Lord maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt*, Mat. 5. 45. *Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without a witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs*, ſaith *Paul* to the Paganiſh people at *Lyſtra*, *Acts* 14. 17.

2. There is the intermediate Circle of ſpecial or limited *Providence*, which reſpects members

bers in common of the visible Church. Unto the *Jews* were committed the Oracles of God, *Rom.* 3. 2. they are called the children of the Kingdom, inasmuch as God honoured them with his Worship and Ordinances, *Matth.* 8. 12.

3. There is the inmost Circle of peculiar and singular *Providence*. In this Circle are the Elect of God, and Called of him in Christ Jesus. The former Circle is a visible one; this invisible: the former of larger circumference than this later; *for many are called, but few are chosen*, Mat. 22. 14. The Apostle *Paul* doth describe this by the notion of an house, in which are vessels of divers sorts, not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; some to honour, and some to dishonour, 2 Tim. 2. 20.

To what hath been said of these different Courts, may be added what doth further appear from *Rom.* 2. where two things are observable:

1. The different descriptions of parties there. The Gentile is set forth in his colours, *v.* 14, 15. the Jew or formal Professor in his, *v.* 17, 28. the sincere Saint in his, *v.* 28, 29.

2. The different aggravation of sin there. The Gentile's sin is aggravated, in that he fights against the displays of a Deity in his Conscience, which accuseth him, *v.* 15. The *Jew* or Formalist hath his sin aggravated, in that he oppugneth higher discoveries from Heaven, *v.* 21, 22, 23, 24. And consequently, He who hath the highest Discoveries, hath

sin

sin in that respect aggravated the more, as in *David* his case, 2 *Sam.* 12. compared with *Psal.* 51.

CHAP. II.

1. QUARREL not with God, because all are not within the inmost Circle of *Providence*. Corrupt Reason is ready to enter its plea against God, as the Apostle intimates *Rom.* 9. 19. But whatever the pleas of Reason are, yet they are without reason: for reason it is that the discoveries of God in Scripture should be decisive in matters. And here, to silence Cavils, there are Four things considerable:

1. Is there ground to dispute with the Almighty for his not making all the Creatures of one or two specifical Kinds? The Lord needed not direction from man in the creation of several sorts of creatures, according as they are brought forth on the Stage of the World, *Gen.* 1. His Will and Wisdom is to check man's Peevishness and Folly. *The Lord* (saith *Solomon*) *hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*, Prov. 16. 4. It is true, that the Lord hath not made the wicked as wicked, by way of positive efficiency; yet he hath consulted with the glory of his Justice in the wicked's existency, and that by way of antecedent permission, or permissive antecedency. It is not from a defect of

Power in God, as if Stones could not be turned into Children unto *Abraham*, as the Baptist asserts, *Mat.*3.9. The Lord's Will is the Supream reason why the Creatures are different both in regard of their natural and moral consideration. No reason is there then for man to cavil at the difference there is (natural or moral) amongst the Creatures.

2. Hath mortal man, without the least impeachment of cruelty, a liberty to appoint such and such young beasts, some for the Plough, others for the Pail, and others for the Shambles? And shall it be dem'd to the Almighty, if he shall appoint, not all, but some, to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ? 1 *Thess.* 5. 9. There is unquestionably a distance by Myriads of Myriads, between Man and an Infinite God. That distance between Man and the Beasts, is but as the Tenth thousand part of an Atom in comparison of the whole World; yea, not that, in comparison of the other distance between Man and the Lord *Jehovah*. To quarrel then at the Lord's Prerogative, is for a man to allow that in himself, which he will not on the other hand allow his Maker and Soveraign Disposer.

3. What if the Lord had wholly excluded men from his grace and favour; and instead of them, magnified his grace towards the lapsed Angels? Had he been unjust, cruel, partial therefore? No, no: and if so, then it follows that he who might pass by all the sons of men without wrong done to them, is not to be censured because he takes compassion

only

only on some, and the rest are hardned: see *Rom.* 11. 5, 7.

4. Men come not into the inmost Circle of *Divine Providence*, because they cannot, but because they will not. A man is told, That if he travel on in such a road, his throat will be cut, for there the Cut-throats are in ambush; if this man will on, his own perverse will is in fault. A man is sick, and this or that Remedy is prescribed, and he will not make use of it; he dies of the disease, but the moral disease of his wilfulness may be rather termed the cause of his death. This is the Sinner's case. He is a resolv'd man for his own ways. *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning? and fools hate knowledg?* Prov. 1. 22. And, *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* To wave then disputes about the Lord's Purpose; There is enough in man to apologize for God in regard of man's not being within the inmost Circle: for go to the Gentile who never heard of Jesus Christ, and so by way of proportion make a judgment of the cases of others, whose ears the joyful sound of the Gospel hath fill'd, but their hearts are empty of grace or goodness, and there will be no reason to multiply words without knowledg: for what saith the great Apostle of the Gentiles? Rom. 1. 21. *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned.* We have here the judgment of the great Doctor of the Gentiles, who had taken cognizance of

the matter: and his decision will the better appear, if a Comment, which a learned man hath on this Text, be alledged.

Doct. Chaloner in Sermon entitled, *God's Bounty and the Gentiles Ingratitude.*

The alledging of God's bountiful declaring of himself, in my Text (saith he), *was to remove an objection which the Gentiles might urge in their own defence; it is not expressly set down, but tacitly implied, in that it is refuted. Nisi,* because, *being a rational particle, and here used a instructive: so that whereas the Gentiles would perhaps have pleaded ignorance to excuse their Idolatry; the Apostle shews them, that their ignorance was* crassa & affectata, *gross and affected, such as the Pope now a days enjoins his subjects; and such, as by the tenures of Philosophy, doth augment rather than diminish an offence: for besides that to excuse ignorance, is required,* First, *That it be not gotten by man's own fault, as theirs was in* Adam's *transgression.* Secondly, *That they bewail their own ignorance, and acknowledg it, and desire to be enlightned by the Spirit of God.* Thirdly, *That God be obliged by Covenant to restore them to that light which they wilfully lost: It is further exacted, That they make good use of that light of nature which is left them, and suffer it not grosly to be extinguished, in which the Gentiles most of all offended.*

Secondly, Look after a place then in the innermost Circle of *Providence*. An interest in God, as reconciled in and through Jesus Christ, is the Pearl of great price to be look't after. The Merchant in the Parable parts with all for the Pearl, *Mat.* 13.45,46. As this Pearl is worth a man's

man's looking after, so a man should not be discouraged from seeking it: for,

1. The Grace of God is extensive to the Plough as well as Scepter: neither Prince nor Peasant are excluded. That direction of *Peter*, *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. concerns men of all ranks; there is *neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all*, Col. 3. 11.

2. What objection a person makes as a pull-back from looking after this Pearl, because of vileness and unworthiness, may be answered, if consideration be had how they who are in the inmost Circle of *Providence*, might have made the like objection, yea, had greater shew of discouragement. The woman of *Canaan* had a treble seeming repulse, and yet is a prevailer. She who was called Dog, gathers up some crumbs of comfort under Christ's Table, *Mat.* 15. 22, *&c.*

Lastly, There is a necessity of getting into this inmost Circle. Neither Civility, nor Common-gifts, will bring the soul to Heaven, without the new birth, and then without *the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*, as 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4. the sounding brass, and the tinckling cymbal, will make no musick in the Heavenly Quire, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2, 3. From the consideration then of the danger of abiding in a state of unregeneracy, reason as the Lepers in another case, *Why sit we here until we dye?* 2 Kings 7. 3, 4.

If it be enquired here, What concerns persons in order to their getting into the inmost Circle of renewing-*Providence*? I answer in brief, negatively and positively.

1. Pass not a false judgment about this Circle; distinguish betwixt Lamps, and Oyl in the Lamps, *Mat.*25.3. Self-conceit and Deceit did undo the Pharisees, *John* 9. 49. Put not therefore Presumption for Faith; a few of *Esau*'s Tears for Repentance; a Civil-life for sound Reformation; Formality for Religion.

2. Resist not the motions of God's Spirit, This was the sin of the Jews: *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do alwayes resist the Holy Ghost*, said *Stephen* to them, *Acts* 7. 51. Many turn the deaf ear unto the whisperings of the Holy One. There is a striving of the Spirit both immediately and mediately in the Ministry of the Word, with the spirits of men: so *Gen.*6.3. Oh take heed then of fighting against Heaven this way!

In the next place positively: and so,

1. Be inquisitive after the way of salvation. *Whither is thy beloved gone! O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside! that we may seek him with thee*, say the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, *Cant.* 6. 1. *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* said the Keeper of the Prison to *Paul* and *Silas*, *Acts* 16. 30.

2. Take time to consider of your ways. When God carries on a good work on men, they consider and bethink themselves of their courses: see *Jer.*8.6. with *Jer.* 31. 18,19. *Hos* 14.1,2,3. *Luke* 15.17.18. 3. Im-

3. Improve all awakening and rouzing Dispensations of *Providence*. Some, if they are sick, or otherwise afflicted, are for an *Ekron*-message, 2 *Kings* 1.2. they talk of Witches, but eye not God, nor have recourse to his servants. Suppose Satan be let loose on them; yet there is a voice of God in the roaring of the Devil. An evil spirit in the daughter of the woman of *Canaan*, is an occasion of good both to Mother and Daughter, *Mat.* 15.22.

4. Follow Convictions with an eye had to God to period them in sound Conversion. *Paul* was convinced of his sins; and what is said of him? *Behold he prayeth*, Acts 9.11. *Paul* is now striking on the Anvil whilst the iron is hot. He soars aloft now at a Throne of Grace, and so avoids temptations. Larks, whilst they sing above in the air, are not in danger of the Fowler's Net. There are four Nets with which and in which the Devil labours to entangle persons under convictions.

1. The Net of Worldly Cares. *Cain* builds houses, *Gen.*4.17. *The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choak the word*, Mat.13 22.

2. The Net of Carnal Fears. It is said in the Parable of the seed, *Mat.*13.21. when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. *Satan* hath his art in scaring persons from godliness, and that by aggravating the displeasure of persons, great ones, the multitude, and friends or near relations. He thus becomes a roaring Lion in the way.

3. The Net of Carnal Jollity. Some sing,

and drink, and play away the Convictions of Conscience. *Saul* is for his Musick, when Conscience jarrs, 1 *Sam.* 16. 17.

4. The Net of vain Opinions. It's no new thing for persons looking after God, to be disquieted by reason of tares sown by some: so *Acts* 15. 1. It hath been observed how the Sectaries in *Germany* did dog at the heels the fresh reception of the Gospel in places. *Galeacius Caracciolus* was in danger of seducers in his first looking after the ways of God. Let then those who have escaped these Nets, and so recovered into the inmost Circle of Regenerating and Stablishing-Grace, be thankful to God; and let others, who have any of these Nets before them, look up to the God of all Grace for wisdom to avoid them. A Praying *Paul* hath Orthodox and good *Ananias* sent to direct him and confirm him in the way of God, *Acts* 9. 17, 18.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXI.

The Motions, Stirrs, Alterations in the World, have oftentimes the Concerns of God's People at the bottom of them: or, There is a ſubſerviency of the Civil Affairs of State, to the Affairs of God's Church or People.

CHAP. I.

BEFORE, the Circles or Courts of *Providence* were ſpoken of: here, we have a diſplay of *Providence* as it refers to thoſe who are, or may in time come to be, in the inner and inmoſt Circle of *Providence*. And that the motions in the World have a reference primarily to thoſe who are called out of the World, or to be called, appears,

Firſt, From plain Aſſertions in Scripture. *Thus ſaith the Lord, your Redeemer the Holy One of Iſrael; For your ſake I have ſent to Babylon, and have brought down all their Nobles and the Chaldeans, whoſe cry is in their ſhips*, Iſa. 43 14. *And except* (ſaith Chriſt) *thoſe days ſhould be ſhortned, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved; but for the elects ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortned*, Mat. 24. 22.

2. From the interwoven types and Hiſtorical paſſages in Scripture to this very end and purpoſe.

pose. Thus God instructed *Abraham* by the smoaking Furnace, what would be the case of his people, and what would be the issue of all, *Gen.* 15. *Ezekiel*'s Vision of the Wheels, runs hand in hand with the former, times being distinguish't; both agree as to the motions in *Egypt* and in *Babylon*; and that as the *Jews* are concerned in those motions of State, *Ezek.* 1. *Daniel* by various types is lesson'd of the Monarchies, what Beasts they are; and how it would be with the Sheep of the Lord's pasture, *Dan.* 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *John* in the *Revelation* is informed of the state of the Church under the Roman Power. These types are in sort an History of things: and besides these, there are passages by way of narrative, which prove the thing here aimed at: for, look we into the motions of State, As Domestick and Forreign; and the truth of this will appear. *Saul* is laid aside, and *David* advanced to the Throne; and what is intended in this, see 1 *Sam.* 15. 28. with 1 *Chron.* 13. 3. *Cyrus* is advanced; but to what end, the Lord informs, saying, *For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by name*, Isa. 45. 1. and how *Cyrus* did answer this Prophetical History, or Historical Prophecy of himself (if it may be so called), see *Ezra* 1. where we have the actual History. Again consider, not only of Histori-

Quemadmodum enim in Veteri Testamento *Daniel* secundum Imperiorum successiones, tum Christi adventum præsignavit, tum Ecclesiæ Judaicæ fata digessit: ita rem Christianam Apocalypsis, Romani quod adhuc post Christum superfuturum esset, Imperii, rationibus admetiri, censenda est, nec eventus abnuit. *Mede* in *Apoc.* Com. pag. 12.

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cal passages referring to the members; but of such which refer immediately to Christ the Head, and so to the Church; and which are the truth of this Observation. Two things may be noted here:

1. The previous Alteration at that time when Christ came. He was born in the days of *Herod* the King, *Mat.*2.1. Who this *Herod* was, and how the Prophecy of *Jacob*, *Gen.* 49. 12. was accomplish't, is known to those who list not to be contentious.

2. The great Tax imposed by *Augustus*, is another thing observable. This made way for Christ's birth at *Bethlehem*, and that as foretold to be, see *Luke* 2. *Augustus* in this Tax pays Tribute to the King of Heaven. He brings stones to build God's Temple, whilst he intends the raising of his Exchequer. His Political Action hath its Ecclesiastical Aspect.

3. From particular Demonstrations: Political motions have their references to the people of God divers ways:

1. By way of castigation for their sins. When the children of the Kingdom wax wanton, no wonder if some become Scourges for the afflicting of them. *Moses* prophetically speaks of this; *But Jesurun waxed fat, and kicked*, &c. Deut.32.15. What follows then? see *v.* 23. *I will heap mischiefs; I will spend mine arrows upon them.* And in *v.* 25. *The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs.* *Moses*, who thus descants, was no false Prophet; the *Israelites* might

might find how a Prophet had been amongst them, 2 *Kings* 17. 6, 7. 2 *Chron.* 36. 14, 15, 16, 17. If we look into following Ages, we shall find, that the house hath been foul, ere the Lord of the house hath taken the Besom in hand, and providentially delivered it into the hands of persecuting ones. Thus *Eusebius* relates: *But after that our affairs through so much liberty, ease, and security, degenerated from the natural Rule of Piety, and after that we pursued another with open contumely and hatred, and when that we impugned our selves by another than our selves, with the armour of spite, and sharp spears of opprobrious words, so that bishops against bishops, and people against people, raised sedition, &c. then persecution came on.* It was wholsome advice therefore, which *Bradford* in the *Marian*-days gave to the City of *London*, *Let the anger and plagues of God most justly fallen upon us, be applied to every one of our deserts, that from the bottom of our hearts every one of us may say, It is I Lord that have sinned against thee; it is my hypocrisie, my vainglory, my covetousness, uncleanness, carnality, security, idleness, unthankfulness, self-love, and such like, which have deserved the taking away of our good King, of thy Word, and true Religion, of thy good Ministers, by exile, prisonment, and death; it is my wickedness that causeth success and increase of Authority and Peace to thine enemies.*

Eccles. Hist. lib. 8. c. 10.

2. By way of subversion or vindictive punishment for affronts and injuries offered to the people of God. God orders some to be Scourges to others who have been Scourges to his people.

people. *Nebuchadnezzar* is the Sword of the Lord againſt *Egypt*, *Ezek.* 29. 18, 19, 20. and what *Egypt* was to the Houſe of *Iſrael*, we have in *v.* 6. where it is ſaid, *All the inhabitants of Egypt ſhall know that I am the Lord, becauſe they have been a ſtaff of reed to the houſe of Iſrael.* The Kings of the earth are to hate the Whore, and to make her deſolate and naked, eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire, *Rev.* 17. 16. If it be asked, Why the Whore of *Babylon* is ſo roughly to be handled? A reaſon there is *v.* 6. *I ſaw* (ſaith *John*) *the woman drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus Chriſt.* It is obſerved how the *Turks* have fallen in on ſome places, and poſſeſt themſelves of ſuch places, from whence the Proteſtants have been expelled by the *Papiſts*. Bloody Popery hath vengeance belonging to it. The more catholick and repeated are the inſolencies and cruelties of Papiſts, the greater ground of ſupport and comfort have godly Proteſtants, and that becauſe the Lord hath his time to make inquiſition for blood: ſee *Pſal.* 9. 11, 12.

3. By way of Diverſion. God doth ſometimes in his *Providence* fill both the heads and hands of men full with work, and ſo they are not at leiſure to perſecute his people. *Saul* cannot follow his game in hunting *David* as a Partridg on the Mountains; there was another hunting-match provided, the *Philiſtines* had invaded the Land, 1 *Sam.* 23. 27. with 1 *Sam.* 26. 20. Both ancient and modern Hiſtories do furniſh with exemplifications to the like purpoſe.

pose. *Providence* hath thrown in a bone of contention, and so there hath been a diversion, and that without sometimes of an utter subversion of persons.

4. By way of Conversion of parties, or propagation of the truth in and by such motions, stirrs, or alterations, as fall out in Kingdoms. The *Romans* had the *Jews* under their yoak, and that makes way for Christ's yoak to be put on the necks of some of the Soldiers; for the Soldiers demanded of the *Baptist*, saying, *And what shall we do?* Luke 3.14. *Cornelius* was a Centurion of the band called the *Italian* band, *Acts* 10. 1. In the Commotions of Germany, some of the *Spanish* Soldiers became Gothers, as *Lavater* reports.

Ex *Hispanis* Militibus, qui armis *Germaniam* religionis causa superioribus annis vexarunt, non pauci ad fidem conversi, & quidem Martyres Christi facti sunt. In lib. *Prov. Sol.* Com. c. 16. v. 17.

2. By way of purgation from sin, and higher measures of sanctification. God knows how to carry on his work, whilst other kind of work is carri'd on by men. They who are good, become better by the sanctified evils of smart which befall them. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged: and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin*, Isa. 27. 9. The motions in the *Babylonian* State, and after in the *Persian*, as they were the Lord's Hammer to knock down the *Babylonians* who held captive the Lord's people, had this tendency, namely, the cautioning of the *Jews* against sin, and that because the Lord had frowned on them in the *Babylonian*,

bylonion, and ſmiled on them in the *Perſian*. So intimates *Ezra*, ſaying, *And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great treſpaſs, ſeeing that our God hath puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve, and haſt given us ſuch deliverance as this: ſhould we again break thy commandments? &c.* Ezra 9. 13, 14.

CHAP. II.

1. TAKE notice of the care and love of God towards his people. God forgets not the good of his people in the motions and commotions that are in the World. Saints under their black clouds ſee not this, and are ready to ſay otherwiſe. *But Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*, Iſa. 49. 24. But what ſaith God, *Can a woman forget her ſucking-child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee*, v. 25.

2. Learn how Divinity will ſee beyond State-Policy. A right view of matters taken as to the Church, is a prognoſtick, how things may probably go in the general as to the State. As there are different motions in the Affairs of State; ſo theſe different motions have their correſpondency with the different temper of a people profeſſing godlineſs. If hypocriſie inſtead of ſerious piety, and other ſins, ſpread as a Gangrene, no wonder if there are frowning-aſpects one way or other, *Iſa.* 10. 6. If ſerious prayer to God, together with humiliation and reforma-

reformation, are made conscience of, then hopes there are, that he who hath torn will heal; and he who hath smitten, will bind up, *Hos.* 6. 7.

3. Give not way to inordinate fears, unbeliefs, and despondencies of heart, in the midst of all the tossings and tumblings of affairs of the world. Let persons mind their duty, and let God alone to govern the world. There are these quieting considerations.

1. All the Affairs of the World are subjected to Christ, who is the Head of the Church, *Eph.* 1. 22. Now if Christ be thus the Head, he is not without eyes, he sees, yea, foresees what is to be done; and he is not without sense; sensible he is what is done in way of affront to his Members. Whilst *Saul* was a persecuting, he saith, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Acts 9. 4. Suppose a man's head did reach up so high as the Heavens, he would feel the injury offered not only to a limb, but to the least of his toes. Though Christ the Head, in regard of his bodily-presence, be above the Clouds; yet he hath a sense and feeling of what is done to the least of his Saints.

2. The Christian hath a very large Charter or Grant, of all things to work for good, *Rom.* 8. 28 The Church hath a very large Joynture; not only the pleasant Vineyards, but the wild Copses of the World, bring in a very rich Income to her. All is hers for good, 1 *Cor* 3. 22. and God thinks nothing too good for her. *I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia*

Ethiopia and Sheba for thee: since thou was precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life, Isa. 43. 3, 4.

3. God hath made that which is a Saint's Priviledg (namely, an holy quietness of heart under the stirs of the World) to be a Saint's Duty, in *Psal.* 112. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Compare this with *Luke* 21. 9. *But when ye shall hear of warrs and commotions, be not terrified.* And that in *John* 14. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* See further, *Phil.* 4. 6.

V OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXVI.

PROVIDENCE outwits the Church's Enemies in their Policies or Contrivances against the Church.

CHAP. I.

HOW God's Care is over his people in the Motions and Commotions that are in the World, hath been touched. Here it will not be impertinent to make an inquisition into an outwitting work of *Providence*, as it respects the Adversaries of the Lord's people: And the truth of the present Observation will appear three ways:

First, From Comparisons in Scripture, the scope of which are to set forth the Providence of God as baffling and be-fooling men's Policies and Devices against his people. So Psal. 124. 7. *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.* And in Psal. 7 *Behold he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falshood: he made a pit, and is fallen into the ditch which he made: his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.* v. 14, 15, 16.

2. From Exemplifications of such, whose

ſinful Policy hath eventually proved notorious folly. *Come on* (ſaith the King of *Egypt*) *let us deal wiſely with them*, Exod. 1. 10. That Wiſdom was ſteep'd in the blood of the *Iſraelites*; and that Court-Sophiſm had another kind of concluſion than intended. The *Iſraelites* are multiplied, get out of *Egypt*, carry away wealth with them; and the *Egyptian* Prince, with the Chivalry of *Egypt*, periſh in the Red-ſea. *Achitophel* is a reputed Oracle for Policy; and yet his Policy, like a Muſket, recoiling, beats him, with his earthly wiſdom, to the earth; ſo that it might be ſaid at his funeral, *Earth to earth:* he was firſt entangled in the working of violent affections; as Pride, in that his counſel was refuſed; and black fears, ſorrows, deſpondencies, in that, his counſel being refuſed, *Abſolom*'s Deſign would miſcarry; And what would become then of the great Abettor of ſuch an horrid Deſign? No Clemency for himſelf, might be the Concluſion: and being thus entangled in the black thoughts of his heart, no wonder if he be further enſnared with an halter, as is recorded 2 *Sam.* 17. 23. *Herod* plays the Politician; a fair Glove is drawn over a foul hand; *Bring me word* (ſaid he to the Wiſemen) *that I may come and worſhip him*, Mat. 2. 7, 8. However he is defeated; for the Wiſemen are not ſuch fools as to give him notice, being warned of God in a dream to the contrary. Neither hath *Herod* reaſon to ſtorm at the Wiſe-men: for if there were a Promiſe, the Promiſe was made to a Worſhipper,

not a Murderer; and no Contract of men must exclude the Lord, who is to have his negative voice; and this sounded loud enough in the Wise-mens heads, though they were asleep; for being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to *Herod*, they departed to their own Countrey another way.

3. From Demonstrations; and that, (1.) In the general. (2.) In particular.

1. In the general. Whoso shall place in the one Scale God's Wisdom, and in the other the Quintessence, Extracts, Abridgments of mens deepest Policies, shall find all the Policies of men too leight to counterbalance Infinite Wisdom. True is that of *Solomon*, *There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord*, Prov. 21. 30.

2. In particulars let a view be taken, (1.) Of the Agents. (2.) Of the Action, Medium, or Way, which is taken to accomplish the end intended by men. As for the Agents, these are of two Orders: (1.) Principal or Primary. (2.) Ministerial or under-Agents; and each of these fall, and that in another sense too, under consideration.

1. The principal or primary Agents have oftentimes *Providence* so counterworking them, as that there is a suspension of action: what is propounded, is as it were thunder-struck; and the Plot stumbles at the threshold: and this comes to pass divers ways:

1. By the interposition of some one or other, who in regard of civil station is among them

them; and so wisely knocks in the head that Project, which otherwise might knock down some professors of the truth. An instance for this, we have in *John* 7. An assembly there is of the chief Priests and Pharisees, *v.* 45. *Nicodemus* interposeth, saying, *Doth our law judg any man before it hear him, and know what he doth*, v. 51. Hereupon *Nicodemus* hath a check given, *v.* 52. and the Assembly is broken up; *for every man went to his own house*, v. 53.

2. By means of some calming-counsel dropt by one or other who is of the same feather with the parties themselves. Principles of Humanity and Ingenuity are not banish't from all; and these check bloody-conclusions, which otherwise had been the birth of Debates and Consultations. *Gamaliel* stopt the Process from coming forth against the Disciples: However his advice were for the Christian's ease, yet it was not consonant to the constitution of the *Jews* Church; for a wild Toleration was no Slip in that enclosed Garden. Whatever Principles *Gamaliel* did act from, I determine not; the issue of his speech is recorded, for to him they agreed, *Acts* 5. 40. It may be observed, how some of the Heathen have interceded for the Christians, and so there hath been a stop more or less put to the persecution of the Christians.

3. By reason of a sharp division or contest amongst the parties themselves. Two men with a long beam carry it not a-thwart into the house; if they shall essay to carry it cross over, they both sit down as fools without

doors: Even so it is with the Adversaries of Lord's people, they are not at an accord with themselves. *This man* (as it was said by some) *is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day: others said, How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles? and there was a division among them*, Joh. 9. 16. So a bone of contention is thrown amongst the Pharisees and Sadducees: *There arose a dissention between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the multitude was divided*, Acts 23. 6, 7.

4. By means of men's own fears. Some would be more mischievous; but they fear where the wind may sit. *Herod* holds his hands from slaying the *Baptist* for a while; fear cramps them, when he would have been doing; *he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet*, Mat. 14. 5. The chief Priests and Pharisees storm at Christ's Sermon: *but when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet*, Mat. 21. 45, 46.

5. By reason of some diversion, their hands being full of other work. The Child is going to school, and by the way a dog grins, and is ready to fall on the Child; another Dog happens to come by, and together the Dogs are by the ears, and so the Child passeth by unhurt. That instance of the *Philistines* invading the land, by means whereof *Saul* was diverted from the pursuit of *David*, is full proof, 1 *Sam.* 23. 27, 28. The Protestants in *Germany* had a Writ of Ease, and that by reason of the *Turk* finding work for the Emperor.

6. By

6. By the death's of persons. Here the action falls to ground with the person. Death is the death of men's Projects and Designs. *In that very day his thoughts perish*, Psal. 146. 4. The Angel tells *Joseph*, saying, *They are dead which sought the child's life*, Mat. 2.20.

7. By means of some other course which *Providence* takes, when it doth not take away the chief Agents by death. Thus when God works a wonderful change on persons, whether by the infusion of grace, or some notable conviction. The Heathen-fury had a stop put to it, by *Constantine* becoming Christian. *Nebuchadnezzar*'s frowns are turned into smiles on *Shadrack*, *Mesech*, and *Abednego*, Dan. 3. And thus for Agents principal, how in regard of them the Design falls to the ground.

2. Agents Ministerial, or under-Agents, which are as hands employed to mischief; others become handless, and that divers ways too.

1. By the position or implantation of grace in the hearts of such. He who becomes a man of other Principles, is a man of other Conclusions. He sees enough of his former course of life, and so will not do as formerly. *Paul* lets fall his Commission against the Disciples at *Damascus*, and so the Mountain-expectations of the High-Priest at *Jerusalem*, vanish into nothing; yea, become something by way of vexation, whenas the Persecutor turns Preacher, *Acts* 9. 19, 20.

2. By some conviction upon the Conscience, though it end not in conversion. God

hath more ways than one in speaking to the hearts of men. The hearts and hands of men may fail to do their work, and yet a saving work of grace is not done upon the heart: so probably in *Joh.* 7. 45, 46. *Then came the Officers to the chief Priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, Why have ye not brought him? the Officers answered, Never man spake like this man.*

3. By some external baffling *Providence*, which puts by the Design intended. The King of *Syria* sent to *Dothan* Horses, and Chariots, and a great Host, and all this is done to seize on *Elisha*; and yet their work is not done: for they came on a blind message; as the story at large is recorded, 2 *King.* 6.

4. By drawing forth the affection of parties, as founded on some relation to them, or kindness received from them. *Saul* was politick in the bestowing his Daughter on *David*, that she might be a snare unto him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 21. But this device of his takes not; for she deceives the Deceiver: Her love to *David* is seen when the Messengers of death were sent for him, and she then becomes *David's* Lifeguard, as in 1 *Sam.* 19. 11, *&c.*

5. By the deaths of such who are employed. They who envy others their lives, may quickly lose their own. *Providence* can soon provide graves for those whose throats are open sepulchers against God's servants. That surly Captain with his Fifty, and the second with his, did experience this: their words were stout against the Prophet; *Thou man of God, the King hath said, Come down*, saith the first. O

man of God, thus hath the King said, Come down quickly, said the other; and instead of the Prophet's coming down, fire came down, and consumed them and their Fifties. Had they been of another spirit with the third Captain sent, they might have had better success in their business, as the other had: see 2 *King.* 3.

6. By some extraordinary display of *Providence*, where death doth not intercept the under-Agent. *Balaam* is sent for to curse *Israel*: He brake not his neck by the way: We read how the Asse crush't his foot against the wall, *Numb.* 22.25. on he goes, but the work is not done; a miraculous over-ruling hand of *Providence* is seen, as *Numb.* 24.10. *And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.* And thus for the Agents ministerial, or under-Agents, how they become vain in their attempts or service in which they are versant.

2. In the next place, The Action, Way, or Means, in order to the End, is to be spoken to: And this may be considered divers ways.

1. As absurd, and improper to bring about the End. The Action is like that of the men, who are said to make an hedg to keep in the Owl; and to seek for a River to drown the Eel in. Men's unruly passions are in-lets of folly: a mist is rais'd by these, and so they see not their way. There is a judicial infatuation to be observed. No wonder if they have a soft

place

place in their heads, who have a hard one in their hearts. *The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness*, Eccles. 2. 14. *Surely the Princes of Zoan are fools; the counsel of the wise counsellors is become brutish*... Isa. 19. 11.

2. If the Way or Means pitch'd on to atchieve the End, be unhappily adequate, apt, or fit, in a sort, to bring about the End intended; then a display of *Providence* there is, in that the Means are not closed with. A two-edged Sword, sharp enough to make a fatal divorce between the head and shoulders, is laid forth on the Council-board; but it appears to be but a Woodden-dagger, and so it is not made use of. Thus the good Counsel of *Achitophel* (good, not morally, but politically, in order to the End intended by *Achitophel*) takes not with *Absolom*, 2 Sam. 17. 14. *Absolom, and all the men of Israel, said, The counsel of Hushai the Arebite, is better than the counsel of Achitophel: for the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Achitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absolom.*

Certè effecit Deus ut ea consilia, quæ astuta erant, *Absolomo* fatua viderentur. *Pet. Martyr.*

3. Though the Means be liked, yet all is dash't by some discovery made, and that by means extraordinary or ordinary. The King of *Syria* his design where he would have his Camp, is discovered by the Prophet to the King of *Israel*, who saved himself thence not once, nor twice, 2 *Kings* 8. 9, 10. *Zerubbabel* and the chief of the Fathers smell a design of the Adversaries of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, when

when they said, *Let us build with you*, Ezra 4. 1, 2, 3. *Nehemiah* perceived that God had not sent *Shemaiah*, but that *Tobiah* and *Sanballat* had hired him, *Neh.* 6. 12, 13. Black designs are unmasked by *Providence*: So the Powder-plot in King *James* his days: Let the Man at *Rome* canonize the Under-agents for Saints, the Canon of Scripture will evidence them to be Sinners: They may be reputed good sons of St. *Peter*, amongst Papists; but shall pass for Saltpeter-men, amongst good Catholick Protestants.

4. Suppose the Means fail not by reason of discovery; yet it is marr'd in the mode or manner of using. Men make more haste than good speed. *The counsel of the froward is carried head-long*, Job 5.3. Now men's counsels (saith a good Interpreter) are carried head-long, when they go too fast forward, and make so much haste on in their way, that they tire, and are out of breath, or stumble, or break themselves, before they can attain their journey's-end. Mr. *Caryll.*

5. If men miscarry not with their Design in the manner of managing it; yet they hit not the season for effecting it. Whether the man trot or gallop on Horse-back to speak with another, it matters not, if that be the day when the man is from his home. *Saul*'s Messengers come with their Net to catch *David*, but the Bird was fled, 1 *Sam.* 19. 12, 14.

6. If there be a seasonable application of Means, according to human apprehension; yet the End is not attained, by reason of some check

check given at the very nick of time. *Man knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?* Ecclesiastes 8. 7. *Cæsar Borgias* mihi dixit, se ad omnem rerum eventum, quem à patris morte futurum putaret, longè in posterum prospexisse, atq; remedia comparâsse: illud unum duntaxat se præteriisse, quod scilicet nunquam putaret sub ejus morte, sibi etiam cum morte esse confligendum. *Nichol. Machiav.* Prin. c. 7. *Cæsar Borgias*, who thought how to manage all to his own interest on his Father's death, little thought of his own sickness at that very time, whereby all his other politick provision made, did avail nothing. It's worthy of observation, how there is a check given at the nick of the intended application of Means, and that sometimes by some single emergency of one thing or other; and sometimes by a throng of contingents and occurrencies. God will be known to be supream; man points, and the Lord disappoints. *Providence* hath many ways to overturn the Politicians Cart. Little doth the Driver imagine what may happen by the way, notwithstanding he may pretend great skill in driving: an Asse with her long ears, or some other object, may fright his Team of Horses, and all the tackling is rent to pieces; yea, it may be, a Cart-wheel goes over our Politick Drivers, and what then becomes of all Political Skill, or Skilful Policy?

7. Suppose the application of Means are not thus check't; yet how is all over-ruled, and hath another issue than was meerly intended? The Bowl hits the Jack, yet lies at such a distance from it, that it wins not the Game.

Here

Here we consider the issue of the application of the Means, two ways: (1.) In respect of Saints. (2.) In respect of Sinners: or, The Designed, and the Designers.

1. In respect of the Designed, or those who are made use by wicked ones. The worst that wicked men can do, is ordered for the best. The dirt and dung of the World shall contribute to the goodly Field of the Lord. *Shimei* his lying and reproaches; yea, the drunken drollery of others in *David*'s days, shall do a *David* good, 2 *Sam.* 16. and *Psal.* 79. 12, 13. There was a Court-Project to cast *Daniel* into the Den of Lions; the King was circumvented in that business: no help for a *Daniel*, but from God: the Plot which took, was broken by its success. Had not *Daniel* been thrown in, what had been become of those signal Dispensations of *Providence* towards *Daniel*, as consequents thereon? see *Dan.* 6. 26, 27, 28. Suppose the Plot of these Courtiers, as for the utmost end of it, the ruin of *Daniel*, had taken? yet *Daniel* had been no loser to dye for his God; they had (no thank to their pride, envy, murder), been instruments for the promoting of *Daniel* in an higher Court than that of *Darius*; *For blessed are they which dye in the Lord, from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*, Rev. 14. 13.

2. In respect of the Designers; and so what they have done, is a foundation for checking what they after attempt to do another way.

As

As it is said of *Mithridates*, that he had so inured his body to counter-poysons to prevent poyson, that when he would poyson himself, then it was the more difficult to effect it. And as it happens to the Carpenter, he wimbles an hole, and a piece of the Wimble is left behind, which obstructs the pin, so that it hath not firm footing: Some who are decided by Jesuits, and intended to be Instruments to check the progress of the Gospel; who may become sturdy resistants of Jesuitical Designs, another way being taken to obstruct the Gospel. And thus the Hedg of Thorns may become (through an over-ruling *Providence*) a good fence to the bed of Roses. God is wise, who makes the earth, even that which brings forth briers and thorns, to obey his people; to allude to that in *Rev.* 12.16.

Again, What men after do, lays foundation for confusion and vexation, in reference to what they have done. They may be said to dance in a net, for the more they are entangled. The chief Priests and Pharisees come to *Pilate* desire the Sepulcher be made sure, lest Christ's Disciples come by night, steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead, and so the last error should be worse than the first, *Mat.* 27.62,63,64. Here we have their Petition; and in *v.* 65, 66, *Pilate*'s Concession, Indulgence, or Grant: But what is the issue of all? Christ riseth, to the terror of the Keepers, shame of the Priests and Pharisees, and the consolation of the Disciples; see *Mat.* 28.

Lastly, What men do to ruin God's people, ends

ends often in the ruin of them and theirs. That day in which the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, was turned to the contrary; so that the Jews had rule over them that hated them, *Esth.* 9. 1. *Haman* and his ten sons perish, *v.* 10. They who accused *Daniel*, they, their children, wives, are cast into the Den of Lions, *Dan.* 6. 24. The bloody Massacre at *Paris* was paid home with blood for blood: for as is related, *Coffin* the Field-Marshal, with Twenty-thousand, is slain at the *Rochel*-siege. *Charles* the ninth wallowed in his own blood, which issued out of all parts of his body; The Duke of *Guise* murdered in the King's own Chamber; the Duke of *Anjou*, who succeeded his Brother *Charles* the Ninth, was stabbed by a Monk; and the Queen-Mother with grief broke her heart. Men have little encouragement to play the *Antiaphels* or *Doegs* against the Lord's *Davids*: let them remember the Hater of the one, and Curse denounced against the other, *Psal.* 52. 5, *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever: he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living.* Selah.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. LEARN what folly it is for men to set their Wits on work against the Lord's people. *Surely there is no inchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel*, said *Balaam* of old, Numb. 23. 23 It were well then if they who go in the way of *Balaam*, the thick-clay-way of worldly Interest, would seriously consider *Jude* v. 11. *Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core.*

2. There is no reason for those who truly fear God, to be disquieted, though sinners set their heads together, and dig as deep as Hell for their plots against the Church of Christ. Two things here are worthy of consideration:

1. A Saint shall do more by his plain prayer to God, than a Sinner by his intricate policy shall do against a Child of God. *O Lord, I pray thee* (said *David*) *turn the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness*, 2 Sam. 17. 31. *David* by a short and pathetical petition to God, prays a wise man into a fool.

Multos *Achitopheles* hodie Antichristus habet secum, quod intelligimus ex illis quæ astutè agit, abundat Papatus copiis & Principum armis, sed astuta consilia magis timenda sunt. Imitemur ergo *Davidem*, oremus Deum, ut infatuet consilium *Achitophelis*. *Martyr.*

2. There

2. There is a notable description of outwitting-*Providence* in regard of the devices of men against the Church. *He that sitteth in the heavens, shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision*, Psal. 2. 4. This laughter here, after the manner of men, is attributed to God. It may point at three things:

1. Sedateness or Tranquillity. God is not affected in the least, by way of perturbation, with the devices and politick contrivances of men. An Army of expert Soldiers is not moved to behold a company of Children making towards them with Reeds in their hands. They therefore who have composed spirits, when wicked ones are busie in their Cobweb-work, do the more resemble Him who sits in the Heavens, and thus laughs.

2. Ability, or Facility to dash their designs. A wise man who laughs at the project of an Adversary, seeth the vanity of the project: He needeth not enter into a deep contemplation how to counterwork so shallow an Invention.

3. Perspicacity, or insight into the case of the Snarers snared by the very course they take. A wise man, who sees in some measure the end of business at the beginning of it, well may laugh when the Adversary shall make a rod for his own back. The Lord gives sinners line, and so they are entangled to their own sorrow. Thus he that sitteth in the Heavens laughs: no reason for them who have the Lord of Heaven for their's, to weep, unless it be for sinning against their Lord.

OBSERVATION XXVII.

Whilst men go on their own Errand, they do God's Business: or, *Men in pursuing their own Ends, bring about the Ends of* Providence.

CHAP. I.

THE truth of this appears: (1.) From God's threatning and punishing of men for such matters, the doing whereof (though not the so doing in regard of the Agent) had its warrant from the Lord. *Jehu* was the Sithe-man of *Providence* to mow down the House of *Ahab*: *Thou* (said the Prophet to him) *shalt smite the house of Ahab*, 2 King. 9. 7. *Jehu* hath a bloody-commission, yet righteous in regard of God, but sinfully executed by *Jehu*, whose end was selfish; and therefore the Lord threatens, saying, *I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu*, Hos. 1. 4.

2. From Exemplifications: and that, (1.) In Civils: Men have their Aims, Ends; the Lord hath his. *Saul* seeks the lost living goods of his Father; and in seeking, is brought to *Samuel*, according as God had before spoken to the Prophet, saying, *To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin*, 1 Sam. 9. 16. *Cyrus* is a ravenous bird; yet what is said of

of him, see *Isa.* 46. 1. ---calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country. (2.) In Sacreds, God hath his end, and men have theirs: the Action is one and the same, the End different. Some prophesie in Christ's name, and yet are rejected at the great day. Christ distinguisheth between gold and dross; prophesying in his name, and for their own names; doing good, and working iniquity whilst they do that which is materially good: see *Mat.* 7. 22, 23.

Again, Exemplifications there are of this, wherein we may behold the work of *Providence* carried on sometimes more immediately, sometimes more remotely: There is work managed at first-hand, and at second and third-hand. The *Philistins* have their End in invading the Land; they intended not the relief of *David* at that nick of time; neither the making way for *David* to the Throne in the slaughter of *Saul* at another time: see 1 *Sam.* 23. 26, 27. 1 *Sam.* 31. with 2 *Sam.* 2.

Lastly, Exemplifications there are, (1.) Of such who mind no such thing as the Lord's work in what they do. They think on what lies before them. A Lust, and not a God; or rather a Lust which is their God, dictates to them:

Utitur ergo Deus in salutem suorum irrationabili & item insensibili creatura tanquam jumento vel instrumento, quæ jam expleto opere nusquam erunt. Utitur creatura rationali sed malevolâ, quasi disciplinæ virgâ, quam correcto filio in ignem projicit tanquam sarmentum inutile. Utitur & angelis & hominibus bonæ voluntatis tanquam commilitonibus & coadjutoribus suis: quos peractâ victoriâ amplissime munerabit. *Bernardus* de gratiâ & libero arbitrio.

them. *The Assyrian meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few*, Isa. 10. 7. (2.) Of such who mind directly the dashing of what is to take place according to God's will. *Joseph's* brethren, whilst they endeavour the crossing of the divine dream, do cross their crossing, *Gen.* 37. 18, 20.

CHAP. II.

1. OBSERVE hence, how men act freely without compulsion, and yet infallibly as the work to be done holds correspondence with the purpose of God, whether secret, or declared. We may say truly in this case, as the High-Priest in another, *What further need have we of witnesses?* Mat. 26. 65. behold their own confessions and acknowledgments do witness their spontaneous actings. Who talks more of his liberty, and what he doth and will do, than the *Assyrian*, Isa. 10. 8, to 15? And yet what is said of the *Assyrian* Soveraign Monarch? There is the Lords, *I will send him against an hypocritical nation*, v. 10. yea, this great Axe and Saw, is but an Ax and Saw, and in the hand of the great God, v. 15.

2. Despond not, how this or that shall be brought about, which shall make for God's glory, and his distressed people's good. *Providence* can find tools enough in the world to do the work of *Providence*. Many a man works

blindfolded in the Shop of *Providence*; and whilst they strike aside the Anvil, they shall hit right strokes on it. It may be observed how men's interests have so interwoven, as that they shall do that, or forward that, which otherwise would not be done. In *Charles* the fifth's days (Emperor of *Germany*) the case of the Protestants was very low; the grave was made; there only seemed nothing else but the tolling the Bell for the Funerals; *Maurice* on a sudden, like a great Bell, is raised, and the thundering-noise hereof frights *Charles* the fifth out of *Germany*. And if we would know what hands were at the Bell-rope, even the hands of *Ferdinand* the Emperor, his own brother; who being chosen King of the *Romans*, that is, the ordinary Successor of the Emperor, and like to be forced to resign the same to *Philip* the Son of *Charles*, is said to have encouraged *Maurice* in that attempt, whereby *Charles* the fifth was conquered after all his Conquests, the Protestants relieved, and *Ferdinand* promoted to the Empire, his Brother *Charles* resigning to him, and betaking himself to a Monastry. See *Fynes Moryson* Itinerary part 3. p. 184.

3. Observe how God can and doth out-wit men in their Policies, by their Policies. *Providence* knows how to make men dig their graves with their own nails. It had been better for *Achitophel* he had never given that politick direction to *Absolom*, to go in unto his fathers Concubines: this fact of *Absolom* might strengthen the hands of them with *Absolom*, as is said 2 *Sam.* 16. 21. but the counsel of *Achitophel* in this fact was (as hath been before intimated) gun-

powder to blow up *Achitophel*, when he was sensible what was like to be the issue of all, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23.

4. Learn to mind the ultimate declared End, God's Glory. *Do all* (saith the Apostle) *to God's glory*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. To seek God's glory in God's way, is for men to consult their own honour. As men in minding their corrupt Ends, bring about the End of *Providence*: so in serious eying the Lord's glory, men are no losers. *Them that honour me* (saith God) *I will honour, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*, Mat. 6. 33. Men will have Gold, or Golds-worth, if God be their Gold, and not their Gold their God.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXVIII.

Haſtes and Delays about matters, are the two great Hinges on which do move the conſiderable iſſues of PROVIDENCE.

CHAP. I.

WHAT a Portal or Introduction both to the Houſe of Feaſting, and to the Houſe of Mourning, Haſtes are, doth appear, if an eye be caſt on Exemplifications following.

In the firſt place then; Succeſs, preſervation, deliverance from dangers, the participation of poſitive good, are brought on the wings of Haſte, or a quick diſpatch about matters. *Abraham* is quick in the purſuit after the four Kings who carried *Lot* away captive, and ſo reſcueth the Lamb from the paw of the Lions, *Gen.* 14. 14, 15, 16. *Alexander* the Great flies like Lightning againſt the *Perſian*, and prevails. So *Dan.* 8. 5. it is ſaid, That the He-Goat touch'd not the ground. And in *ver.* 6. he ran unto him, (*i. e.* to the *Perſian*-Ram) in the fury of

Hæc igitur descriptionis parte, significatur summa celeritas: quemadmodum legimus apud Curtium de *Alexandro* Magno, cum roganti cuidam, quomodo res tantas tam brevi tempore perfecisset, respondit his verbis Μυδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενος &c. *Arrianus* refert, *Parmenionem* cum prœlium esset ineundum ad Granicum flumen, suasisse nonnihil *Alexandro*, ut illud differret ad posterum diem, sed *Alexandrum* non obsecutum *Parmenioni* mox Granicum transisse, & fæliciter confixisse. *Polanus* Com. in *Dan.* c. 8.

his power. History makes mention of *Alexander*'s Celerity as the in-let of his Conquests. *Jehu* his Haste, was a key to open the Royal Palace-door for himself to get in, and so to throw out the Family of *Ahab*, 2 *King.* 9. 13, 15, 20. The men of *Jabesh-Gilead* are holpen by *Saul*'s coming speedily for their help, 1 *Sam.* 11. 6, 7, &c. *Abigal* hasteneth to *David*, cools his passion, and so preserveth her own coal from being quench't in Israel, 1 *Sam.* 25. 18. The chief Captain immediately took Soldiers, and ran down unto the people who were about to kill *Paul*, and so delivers him, *Acts* 21. 32.

Homines nimio festinandi studio sæpe aberrant, & serò iter propositum perficiunt. Docet hæc sententia, cavendam esse temeritatem & præcipitantiam, cui juvenes maximè sunt obnoxii: cogitent igitur nihil sine consilio, ac temere esse suscipiendum. *Lavat.*

4. On the other hand, Hastes do sometimes throw open the door to the House of Sorrows and Destruction. *He that hasteth with his feet, sinneth*, saith the Wise-man, *Prov.* 19. 3. An hair-brain *Abimelech* hath his skull broken to pieces, *Judg.* 9. 52, 53. The wanton rash young man goeth after the lustful Whore straightway, or suddenly, as

an ox to the slaughter, *Prov.* 7. 22. *Josiah* made more haste than good speed, in his going forth against *Necho* King of *Egypt*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 21, 22, 23, 24. *Jonah* rashly flies to *Tarshish*, and so the Whale's belly is his house of mourning.

In the next place, Delays are of consequence, and that as three ways considered:

1. As ushering in Evils.
2. As preventive of Evils.
3. As bringing in some positive Good.

1. Delays are doors, or in-lets to Evil: *Joab* cautions *David* against a Delay. *Now therefore arise, go forth and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the Lord, If thou go not forth, there will not tarry with thee one this night, and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now*, 2 Sam. 19. 7. The Delay of the *Levite* is the occasion of his being benighted, and so he stops at *Gibeah*; where what followed, is recorded. That long chain of Evils, of burning lusts, cutting up the Concubine in pieces, the deaths of many thousands in the Wars, hath a Delay for the first link thereof, *Judg.* 19. 8. We find in History, how the Emperor *Mauricius* delaying to execute the Traytor *Phocas*, by reason of the Festival-season of the Nativity of Christ, *Phocas* escapes in that interval of time, becomes the bloody Murderer

cy of *Maurice*, and so usurps the Royal Throne. *Lot*'s sons-in-law are warned to get them gone out of *Sodom*; they who were so cold in heeding *Lot*'s admonition, perish in the hot flames of *Sodom*; yea, it is said of *Lot*, *While he lingred, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the City*, Gen. 19. 16.

2. Delays are sometimes preventive of Evil. *Joseph* is cast into the pit; the brethren sate down to eat and to drink; the *Ismaelites* draw nigh to them, and so the Lamb is not butchered; he is sold, being reserved for a rich Leese in the Land of *Egypt*, Gen. 37. 23, 24, 25, 26. Delay prevents a murderous act of a wrathful King, and saves the life of a Prophet, 2 *Kings* 6. 32.

3. Delays are Hand-maids to some positive Good. A Good becomes a double Good by a sanctified Delay of *Providence*. The Butler delays to remember *Joseph*, Gen. 40. 23. he remembers him then, when a distress at Court might render *Joseph* the more welcome thither, *Gen.* 41. 9, *&c.* *David* makes haste to the Throne by Delays: for sanctified steps were good steps to the Throne. In great Atchievements sober Delays strike a great stroak. *David* is not to bestir himself in falling on the *Philistins*, till he hear the sound of going in the tops of the Mulberry-trees. He, in fetching a compass behind them, takes

the

the straightest course for the *Philistins* falling before him, 2 *Sam.* 5. 23, 24, 25. *Fabius* the Delayer became victorious by his prudent and politick Delays. *Soft and fair goes far sometimes in Mars his field.*

Romanæ Reipub. plus profuit *Fabii* cunctatio quam *Marcelli* præceps temeritas: plus consilio & ingenio quam robore agitur. Curandum autem est, ne nimia cunctatione rerum gerendarum occasiones perdamus. *Livius.*

CHAP. II.

1. LEARN, how wicked men are out-witted and out-work't by *Providence*. They are Snails when they should be Dromedaries, and Dromedaries when they should be Snails. *They conceive mischief, but bring forth falshood*, Psal. 7. 14. If there be not a sudden abortion, there is a passing the time of delivery. Thus according to the common forms of speech, *they come a day after the fair*; or, *their hasty Bitches puppy blind whelps.*

2. Beware of sinful Hastes and Delays. *He that believeth, shall not make haste*, Isa. 28 16. *Jacob* was too hasty in catching after the blessing by the use of undue means, *Gen.* 27. And on the other hand, remember *David*, *Psal.* 119. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.* Eccles. 12. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* John 12. 35. *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.*

If

If it be enquired, What Rules are of use here, as they respect Hastes and Delays? It may be answered in three Directions:

1. Be well acquainted with thy constitution or temper; wisely suspect it, and accordingly moderate it. Some are of an hasty temper; they are like fire in straw: have a Gunpowder disposition; it is probable *Peter* was so, *Mat.* 26. 35, &c. *John* 18. 10. Others are of a slow temperament: The *Cretians* are said to be *slow-bellies*, Tit. 1. 12. Wisdom then must have its spur or curb, and use one or other as there is occasion.

2. Take a rational surveigh of matters. Consider things with their circumstances. So teacheth *Solomon* in the case of rash Suretiship, *Prov.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And in *Eccles.* 8. 5. *A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.* A due view of matters is of great importance, when to be swift, and when to be slow.

Cum diu cogitaveris, tunc fac quod probaveris. Nihil ex præcipiti magnum.

Consilii mora melior: in rebus autem certis bene agendi tarditas removeatur arte. Tolle moras, in tractatum nihil differas. *Isid. Hisp.* lib. 2. Synon. c. 12.

3. Eye God for direction and success. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps,* Jer. 10. 23. Here *Jeremiah* bolts forth a Doctrine, and *Solomon* gives us a good practical Use of the point; *Prov.* 3. 6. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

4. Bless God for what of mercy is conveyed by Hastes or Delays. It is said, *Abigail* made

haste, 1 *Sam.* 25. 18. and *David* takes notice of the *Providence*, for saith he, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me*, v. 32. O how much is there of a glorious display of *Providence* both in Hastes and Delays! The Church of God doth experiment this: The wind of *Providence* blows good to the Lord's people, and that though at different points of the Compass. Sometimes they who are Pirates, and seek to make a prey of God's people, are wind-bound: and sometimes a fair wind they have, but the gust are so strong and vehement, as that the Ship of Fools is swallow'd. A notable story for illustration may be here set down, which hath been recommended to divers from the learned and pious *Usher*; whose Uncle (as I have been informed) telling the story (but not knowing the person) at Christ's Church in *Oxford*, at the Table there, a Gentleman blush't, and confessed himself to be the man. And seeing the story is in print now, I shall set it down as it is related by one of our own worthy Writers; and pass to another Aphorism or Observation.

Dod. *Fuller*, the History of the Worthies of *England*, *Westmerland*, p. 137.

"About the third of the reign of Queen "*Mary*, a Pursevant was sent with a Commis"sion into *Ireland*, to impower some eminent "persons to proceed with fire and fagot a"gainst poor Protestants. It happened, by *Di*"*vine Providence*, this Pursevant at *Chester* lodg"ed in the house of a Protestant-Inn-keeper, "who having gotten some inkling of the mat"ter, secretly stole his Commission out of his "Cloak-bag, and put the Knave of Clubs in the

room

" room thereof. Some weeks after he appears
" before the Lord's of the Privy-Council
" *Dublin* (of whom Bishop *Coren* a principal)
" and produced a Card for his pretended Com-
" mission. They caused him to be committed to
" prison for such an affront, as done on design
" to deride them. Here he lay for some months,
" till with much ado at last he got his enlarge-
" ment. Then over he return'd for *England*,
" and quickly getting his Commission renew-
" ed, makes with all speed for *Ireland* again.
" But before his arrival there, he was prevent-
" ed with the news of Queen *Mary's* death, and
" so the Lives of many, and the Liberties of
" more, poor Servants of God, were preser-
" ved.

The black Box, it seems, wherein the bloody Commission was at first, was tied up with an hold-fast knot till opened in *Ireland*.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXIX.

PROVIDENCE hath its various or several aſpects in matters: or, *The Eye of PROVIDENCE looks more ways than one.*

CHAP. I.

IN *Ezek.* 1. every one of the living creatures had four faces, *v.* 6. and the wheels there, or rather the rings of them, as the more immediate ſubject, are ſaid to be full of eyes, *v.* 18. What may theſe paſſages in the viſion import, but probably the manifold aſpect of *Providence* in matters? However, the truth of the Obſervation may be conſidered two ways:

1. Exemplifications there are in Scripture to this purpoſe. That *Providence* in the Brethren's going down to *Egypt*, had its various aſpects: it did look backward on their guilt, for that is brought to remembrance, *Gen.* 42. 21. and it did look forward to their preſervation in the time of Famine, as *Joſeph* doth inform them, *Gen.* 45. 7. The borrowing of the *Egyptians* Treaſure, *Exod.* 12. 31, 36. reſpects the *Egyptians* in a way of puniſhment, in the Lord's transferring the property of the goods borrowed, to the *Iſraelites*, who

are

are now well paid for their hard service, and are furnish't with materials for the Tabernacle, such as gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, and scarlet, Onyx-stones, &c Exod. 35. The taking of the Ark by the *Philistines*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 11. seems to confute a conceit of God's protecting Presence, because of the outward symbol or sign of his presence in which the *Israelites* rested, as 1 *Sam.* 4. 3, 4. and not only so, but to punish the *Israelites* for their Ark-removing sins or provocations, as 1 *Sam.* 2. 22. Neither doth that *Providence* stop here, God vindicates the honour of the Ark thus taken; the *Philistins* shall be overcom'd; when they do overcome: The Ark of God amongst them, that Sacred Chest, becomes in a sort a large Coffin for the burial of many of them: for there was a deadly destruction thorowout all their Cities; the hand of God was heavy on them, as is recorded 1 *Sam.* 5. 6, 9, 11. The slaying of *Saul* by the *Philistins*, respects not only *Saul*'s punishment for his sins, but the exaltation of *David*, according to God's promise, on which the *Providence* cast an aspect in order to its gradual fulfilling: for now *David* goes up to *Hebron*, 2 *Sam.* 2. 1. In *Mat.* 1, 2. the Wise-men came from the East: the journey of theirs did respect their own good, the alarumning of the *Jews* to consider of the *Messiah*'s being born; the confirmation of *Joseph* and *Mary* their faith in Christ. In *Mat.* 8. 24. Christ was asleep in the Ship: This sleep, as it was demonstrative of his Human Nature, and probably an effect of weariness

a sin-

sinless infirmity, see *John* 4. 6. So also did it serve for the trial of the Disciples, as *v.*25. In *v.*38. of the same Chapter, we read of two possessed with Devils. That *Providence* in the possession there, had its manifold aspects: the various ends for which it might serve, may in brief be indigitated; as, (1.) To punish and chasten for sin the possessed, and others afflicted by the possessed; for it is said, *v.* 28. *they were exceeding fierce, so that no men might pass that way.* (2.) To exercise the Disciples: for no sooner are they escaped the sea-storm, but a land-one waits for them: before there were fears of drowning; now an occasion for fears lest they should be torn in pieces by the possessed with devils. (3.) To illustrate the power and goodness of Christ, who frees the house of evil tenants, and putteth reason, if not grace too, into possession; see *Luke* 8. 35. (4.) To make way for the punishment of the Hoggish *Gergesenes*, whose Swine were dearer to them than the Lamb of God, see *v.*34. And thus for Exemplifications: more might be instanced in; but these may suffice, and that the rather, seeing others will be couch'd in what follows.

2. There are distributions, distinctions, or considerations of the Aspects of *Providence*. These may be diversified or branched divers ways.

1. The Aspect of *Providence* sometimes looks upward after a more signal sort, and not so downward on the party, the subject of the Dispensation. So in the man who was

blind from his birth: *Master* (say the Disciples), *who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him*, John 9. 1, 2, 3. Had there been no sin in the World, there had been no blindness. The blindness of this man was an afflictive evil both to the man and his Parents: It cannot then be denied, as if *Providence* did overlook sin, and the affliction of Son and Parents absolutely: its aspect there is downward in a sense, but more signally another way, *viz.* That by Christ in the blind man the work of God might be declared, as one noteth.

Natus est itaq; cæcus, ut per Christum in cæco declaretur opus Dei. *Musculus.*

2. The face of *Providence* looks on others as well as the parties who are the immediate subjects of it. And this, (1.) By way of caution or warning to take heed of sin, for which such and such have been the subjects of smart. Thus in *Jeremiah*'s time are willed to note the *Shiloh-Providence: But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel*, Jer. 7. 12. *Remember Lot's Wife*, saith Christ, *Luke* 17. 32. (2.) By way of imitation, in regard of the exercise of grace. *Job*'s trials may lesson others, who have little of *Job*'s afflictions, and less of his patience under them. God did set him up as a stately Monument for the display of grace to the ages to come, *James* 5. 11. (3.) By way of particular encouragement to look up to God, and wait on him for help, and that because of the intervention of special *Provi-*

dence,

dence; which though in the first place it centers in, or falls on one; yet reacheth another's case. A clear instance for this, we have in *Mark* 5. where *Jairus* besought Christ for his daughter at the point of death, *v.* 23. By the way a stop is made; an intervening-*Providence* there is in the cure of the woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, *v.* 25, to 34. Now this *Providence* in the cure of the woman, may serve for the cure of *Jairus* his faith; it might encourage him who met with such an encouraging-dispensation. Christ saith to him, *Be not afraid, only believe*, *v.* 36. Christ here, like the Husbandman, neglects not the Vine, whilst he goes aside a little to seek for a prop for its support.

3. The Aspect of *Providence* is sometimes frowning, but after a different sort. There is the wrinckled brow of Displeasure, but dissent, as it respects slaves and children in the family. The same *Providence* which hath sharp teeth for sinners, hath its filed or blunted ones for Saints. So in that overflowing-scourge *Isaiah* speaks of, *Isa.* 28. Some shall be trodden down by it; a wo there is to the mockers there, see *v.* 18, to 23. Others they have ground and direction for support; and they might eye Christ who was to come, and so conclude there would not be an utter extirpation of the Nation, and for his sake there would be mitigation; see *v.* 16. yea, that though they who were the good corn, met with the wheel; yet it is not a breaking-wheel, as is there allegorically intimated, *v.* 28. see

some what a parallel-place, which may serve both for a proof of what is here intended, and a comment or exposition on this of *Isaiah*'s Prophecy, *Amos* 9. 9, 10.

4. The face of Providence looks sometimes on what is past, present, and to come. *Nebuchadnezzar*'s expulsion from the Royal Seat, looks back on the Prophetical Vision as interpreted by *Daniel*, chap. 4. 25. It stares *Nebuchadnezzar* in the face; looks big on him, when *Nebuchadnezzar* is swollen big with pride: *For while the word* (a proud one) *was in the King's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven*, &c. V. 31. *The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men*, &c. v. 33. And this his being driven from men, looks forward, inasmuch as the proud flesh being eaten out by this Corrosive, he is restored again to his Power and Dignity, *v.* 34, 35, 36, 37. *Jonah* is thrown over-board into the sea, *Jonah* 1. 15. Here, by this *Providence*, as the Mariners are lessoned to know more of the God of the Winds and Sea; so *Jonah* is catechized by the rough Messenger which pursued him: *The sea wrought, and was tempestuous*, v. 11. The points of *Jonah*'s Catechism were two: What an Evil he had committed, *v.* 12. and, What good the Lord intended by making him ductile and pliable to go to *Nineveh*, and preach unto them the preaching that God bid him, as it is said *Jonah* 3. 2.

5. The Aspect of *Providence* may be considered as primary and secondary. There is a primary or chief Errand which *Providence* hath

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to a man under this or that Diſpenſation; as he who goes to a Prince's Court, intends principally the ſight of the Prince, and yet beholds others there. Sometimes an afflictive Diſpenſation may be primarily, by way of caſtigation for ſome ſpecial ſin; and ſecondarily, by way of probation, trial, or exerciſe of grace. Thus in *David*'s caſe, when *Abſolom*'s wild and horrid pranks are the Remembrancers of *David*'s folly in the matter of *Uriah*, ſee 2 *Sam.* 12. Again, otherwhiles a Diſpenſation of *Providence* may principally reſpect the trial of grace, and not ſome ſignal guilt foregoing. So in *Job* his caſe, *Providence* might caſt there an eye on the ſins of his youth, as that paſſage *Job* 13.26, may import; and yet it might primarily intend and point out the ſparkling-graces of his riper years: for we read of *Job*'s precious piety, and rare or admired circumſpection, before the Devil was let looſe on him; and likewiſe the Lord's approbation of him: and nothing doth Satan charge againſt *Job*, but a falſly ſuppoſed guilt of ſelfiſhneſs in ſerving God, ſee *Job* 1. Theſe and the like Reaſons may ſway, That though correction for ſin is not excluded, yet the diſplay of grace was primarily intended in that ſtartling Diſpenſation of *Providence*.

CHAP. II.

1. WHAT stupidity, dulness, and inadvertency, is abroad in the World! *Providence*, like the Sun, scatters its beams, and and few they are who see them. The most of persons, if they see any thing, it's like that man in *Mat.* 8. 24. *I see men* (saith he) *like trees walking.* It's often to be noted, how men have general and confused apprehensions of a frowning aspect of *Providence*; It is for our sins, say they, that this or that judgment is: Here is a stop; they are not by a frowning *Providence* frown'd into an holy loathing of such sins which *Providence* frowns on. The Aspects of *Providence* are little seen, and less improved, *Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider*, Isa. 1. 3.

2. Take heed of slandering *Providence* in its Aspects. Make not that an encouraging Aspect of *Providence*, which God doth not so make, constitute, or appoint. There is a Negative Aspect of *Providence*, where man sometimes fancies a Positive one. He that shall follow the false Prophet because of a sign given, and that sign comes to pass, abuseth *Providence* in a pretended Aspect of it; see *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3.

3. Labour to be verst in the Aspects of *Providence*. For want of an holy dexterity this way, a man wrongs God, others, and himself: He fastens, by a wrong construction, that on God, which the Lord approveth not; and is injurious to others and himself, as others or him-

himself are concern'd in the wrong Conclusions drawn from the Aspects of *Providence*. Here some Directions might be insisted on; I shall touch on a few.

1. Take heed of an erroneous judgment. *If the light that is in a man, be darkness, how great is that darkness?* Mat. 6. 23. The *Jews*, who took themselves to be in the right, and withal judged Christ to be a Deceiver, how do they misapply the Aspect of *Providence* towards Christ on the Cross? It's true, the Aspect was a frowning one; but not in such sort as they blasphemously asserted it to be, see *Mat.* 27. 39, 40, 41, 42, 43. The two Witnesses are slain; and what befalls them, is otherwise, than according to truth, interpreted by them who did rejoyce over them, and make merry, *Rev.* 11. 10. *Luther*, whilst a zealous *Papist*, had other thoughts of the Dissentients from the *Romish* Synagogue, than afterwards when his judgment was set right, as he declareth in his Preface to the Confession of Faith of the Barons and Noblemen of *Bohemia*.

Inter hos autem accurrebant & isti fratres, quos *Pighardos* vocabant, jam mihi non ita invisi, ut antea erant in Papistate meâ.

2. Consider how a benign Aspect may be a frowning one; and a frowning one, a favourable one. The prosperity of a sinner, is his misery; and the adversity of a Saint, is his mercy, as the Lord ordereth the matter in the course of his *Providence*. Want of wisdom to see a mystery in God's *Providence* on

this wise, is the reason why men are out in their apprehensions about the Aspects of *Providence*. The *Psalmist* speaks fully to this, saying, *O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep! a brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this: when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for evermore*, Psal. 92. 5, 6, 7.

3. Be not too quick or hasty in passing a judgment on an Aspect of *Providence*. The Wind of *Providence* is up, but how soon, and where, or in what quarter it may set, man knoweth not. The *Barbarians* censure *Paul* for a Murderer, because Vengeance in its frowning aspect pursues him; but when *Paul* shook off the Beast into the fire, and felt no harm, they changed their minds, *Acts* 28. 3, 4, 5, 6.

4. Remember how the Aspects of *Providence* have a different consideration. Sometimes a *Providence* respects the Person, but not the Action. So in *Abraham*'s case; God preserves his Wife, which was like to be defiled in *Abimilech*'s Court. God had a respect to *Abraham* as he was *Abraham* the Saint, *Abraham* the Prophet, not *Abraham* the distruster of *Providence* in that matter. The Aspect of *Providence* doth not countenance *Abraham*'s miscarriage in that business: *Abraham* is spoken of there as a Prophet, not a Dissembler, Gen. 20. 7.

Again, *Providence* may respect the substance of the action, business, management, not the circumstances, or irregularity coupled with

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the intention, diſpoſition, endeavour to do this or that. It is ſaid, God dealt well with the Midwifes, *Exod.* 1. 20. Suppoſe they had told a lye, yet God dealt not well with them because they lied; but because they were merciful to the people of God, as *Austin* obſerveth, or becauſe they feared God, as it is ſaid *v.* 21. Whatever were their ſlips, it ſeems they did act from a vertuous principle, which God graciouſly taketh notice of, and recompenceth, as is ſaid in the verſe mentioned. *Lot* hath a ſhare in a ſignal *Providence*, by way of reſcue or deliverance from the hands of rude neighbours, *Gen.* 19. 9, 10, 11. He had made a fair, or rather a foul, propoſal of Articles for accommodation, *v* 8. *Providence* doth not countenance that proffer of his; it muſt not be conſtrued ſo, but as it it reſpects *Lot* a Saint, or his pious diſpoſition and endeavour to preſerve his Gueſts: *Providence* keeps him, who was willing to have the Laws of Hoſpitality kept unviolated, as he profeſſeth, ſaying, *Only unto theſe men do nothing; for therefore came they under the ſhadow of my roof*, ver. 8.

Laſtly, *Providence* reſpects neither Perſon nor Action, but ſomething elſe which is the primary object of its aſpect. *Joaſh* is only ſav'd alive, when all the Seed-Royal is deſtroyed by *Athaliah*, 2 *Chron.* 22. 10, 11, 12. He prov'd bad enough afterward, notwithſtanding ſo ſignal preſervation, and exaltation

ukation to the Throne: God's *Providence* in the preserving of him, and exalting him, did not so much respect him, unless to aggravate his sin; as the promise made to *David*, whose line was not quite to be extinguish't; for so it is intimated in 2 *Chron.* 23. 3. *Behold the kings son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David.* *Ismael* is a great man; and whence is this? The Prayer of a good Father, and the Promise of the great God, are the stilts on which *Ismael*'s Greatness mounteth aloft, as is exprest *Gen.* 17. 20.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXX.

Some Passages of PROVIDENCE *are Preludes, Harbingers, or Forerunners of a Train of* Providence *behind.*

CHAP. I.

AS there are prefix't Passages or Prefaces to what the Lord commendeth to man's consideration in the Sacred Scripture, as, *Hear, O Israel, thus saith the Lord: whoso hath ears to hear, let him hear:* So there are Prefaces to God's Providential Dispensations. Before, in the Aspects of *Providence*, it was touch't how some did look forward to matters, these Aspects, which may be termed Preamial, or Precursory, are like Scouts of the Army, or the Forlorn-hope, which engage first, ere the body of the Army come up to grapple with the Enemy. Now that there are Providential passages of this nature, appears,

1. From Increpations or Reproofs for not heeding them. So *Hos.* 7. 9. *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.* And so *Mat.* 16. Christ checks the

the *Jews*, in that they could observe a foregoing work of *Providence* in Naturals, but not so in Spirituals: *When it is evening* (saith he) *ye say it will be fair weather, for the skie is red; and in the morning, it will be foul weather, for the skie is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the skie, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times*, v. 2,3. The *Jews* did not so take notice of Prophecies referring to Christ; The Scepter's departing from *Judah*; The coming of *John the Baptist* that Gospel-*Elijah*; The Miracles of Christ done amongst them: All which, not so heeded, might be procmial signs too, of approaching judgment. They, it seems, were better versed in their Almanacks, than in their Bibles, for the accommodation of what is in their Bible to their present condition; and for this their stupidity, they are check't by Christ, and that sharply too.

2. From Admonitions or Exhortations to take notice of such Prefaces of *Providence* to matters. There is a Treatise of antecedent signs penn'd by a Divine-hand, *Mat.* 24. Those percursory signs spoken of there, may be considered with respect to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the World. An Admonition to consider of the one, we have in v. 15. *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet; whoso readeth, let him understand*, &c. An exhortation to improve the other, yet not excluding the former sort of approaching signs of calamity, we have in v. 32. *Now learn a parable of the fig-tree,*

when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that Summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know it is near, even at the door.

3. From Exemplifications of such Prefaces of *Providence*, and that as they have a reference (1) To persons good; and (2.) bad.

For the first sort. *Moses* slays the *Egyptian* smiting an *Hebrew*, *Exod.* 2. 21. This fact of *Moses* seems to be a presage of *Moses*, as one who would be the Hammer of *Providence* to knock down the *Egyptians*, as he afterwards proved. Before *Moses*, *Joseph* had that in a dream which was afterwards fulfilled, as *Gen.* 37. 5, 6, &c. *Sampson* rent the young Lion as one would have rent a Kid, *Judg.* 14. 5, 6. He afterwards makes renting-work amongst the *Philistins*. *David* slays the Lion and the Bear; and after that, a Metaphorical Lion or Bear, namely, *Goliah* the *Philistin*, 1 *Sam.* 17. These Acts were preambulatory to noble and royal Acts of Valour performed by him afterwards. Our Saviour in his minority is found sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions; and all that heard him, were astonished at his understanding and answers, *Luke* 2. 46, 47.

Again, There are some Prefaces of *Providence* which respect the Bad, whom *Providence* may use for black work to be done in the world. It is said, *Sarah saw the son of Agar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking*, Gen. 21. 9. Here is an early discovery of *Ismael*, whose posterity were cruel mockers in-

indeed, as *Psal.* 83. 6. they were of that Junto there spoken of; and did persist on in the old antipathy of their father, who, born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit, *Gal.* 4. 29. *Jeroboam* was to be a scourge to the house of *David*: He was an active man, whom *Solomon* takes cognisance of, 1 *King.* 11. 28. His new Garment is rent into twelve pieces, and ten of them are delivered him by the Prophet, *Ahijah*, and that as a presage of the ten Tribes to be headed by him, *v.* 30, 31. *Solomon* sought to kill *Jeroboam*, but *Jeroboam* escapes into *Egypt*, there he lurks till the seed of Sedition is up, and towards its harvest, as *v.* 40, with the next Chapter compar'd. *Judas* betrays his Master, besides a typical presage of this, *Psal.* 41. 9. with *Acts* 1. 16. there were some other presages, which after his horrid treachery, might be better understood by the Disciples. That in *John* 6. 70. *Have not I* (saith Christ) *chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* was a tinckling of the Larum-bell amongst the Disciples. Whether *Judas* did then spet some of his venom, yet more secretly, amongst the Disciples which there went back, and walked no more with Christ; and so open'd, or helpt to hold open, the door of their apostacy: or whether, upon their apostacy, he begun to make a stir amongst the eleven, and so was a Mutineer in that small company left, is not so expresst in the Chapter; yet whether the one or the other, or both, may not be implied as the occasion of Christ's speech, may not peremptorily be denied. We find how

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the ſame *Judas* was a Make-bate, a Quarreller at another time, *John* 12. *Why was not* (ſaith he) *this ointment ſold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?* v. 5. *This he ſaid* (ſaith the Text, v. 6.) *not that he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag and bare what was put therein.* *Judas* his heart was as full of covetous projects, as the bag of treaſure which he bare. His heart was betray'd by this World's goods, ere he betrays his Lord and Maſter. The Devil knows how to hew an Hypocrite, a Traytor, a Murderer, out of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs. A worldly heart will be any thing than what it ſhould be. The prognoſticks or preſages of Apoſtacy, may be ſeen in an inordinacy of affection to the things of this life. So in *Judas* here, that Lion which is known by his griping-paw.

4 From the Diſtinctions of Proemial Diſpenſations, or Preſages of *Providence*. Theſe may be conſidered,

1. In reſpect of the Mode or Manner, how they are by way of Preſage.
2. In reſpect of the Matter, to which they have reference.
3. In regard of the Subjects or Perſons concern'd in them.

First, In the firſt place then, Preſages are conſidered, (1.) By way of meer ſignificancy; and that, (1.) Negatively, as to that which ſhall not be. So the Bow in the Cloud

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is a ſignificant Pledg or Token that the waters ſhall no more become a flood to deſtroy all fleſh, *Gen.* 9. 13, 14, 15. See *Iſa.* 7. 5, 6, 7. with 11, 14, 15. (2.) Poſitively, as to that which thus or thus falls out. So the ſhooting of the Arrow by *Jehoahaz*, and the ſmiting upon the ground with the Arrow, were a preſage, though an extraordinary inſtituted one, of the ſmiting of the *Syrians*, 2 *King.* 13. 17, 18, 19. The crowing of the Cock was a preſage of what Chriſt had ſaid to *Peter*, *Mat.* 26. 34. with 74, 75.

2. By way of real Cauſality; And ſo *David*'s noble Exploits had an influence to his being received as King by the Tribes of *Iſrael*, who came to him, ſaying, *Behold, we are thy bone, and thy fleſh: alſo in time paſt, when Saul was king over us, thou waſt he that leddeſt out, and broughteſt in Iſrael: and the Lord ſaid to thee, Thou ſhalt feed my people Iſrael, and thou ſhalt be captain over Iſrael: ſo all the elders of Iſrael came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron, before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Iſrael*, 2 Sam. 5. 1, 2, 3.

3. By way of ſignificancy and cauſality. There are Preſages mix't. *Gideon* goes to the *Midianites* Tents, hears one of the Soldiers telling his dream to his fellow; and likewiſe the interpretation thereof given by his fellow: and hereupon *Gideon* is quickned to faith, prayer, and courage to ſet on the Army of the *Midianites*, who are worſted, as *Judg.* 7. 10, &c.

Hither

Hither may be referred Comets, or Blazing-Starrs as vulgarly termed: which as they have often an experienced significancy, so some causal influence: for (as is observed by some) the matter of these being hot and dry exhalations, no wonder if there follows, (1.) Barrenness of the Earth, and so the fruits thereof more or less fail. (2.) The reduction of the Humours in men's bodies to an hot and dry intemperature. (3.) From this intemperature of the Humours, what can be expected but an epidemical spreading of acute Diseases. (4.) From the hot and dry intemperature both of Bodies and the Air, the Minds of men, which have a sympathy with the Body, are easily provoked to wrath, contentions, brawls, and fights: and whereas Kings and Princes are more delicate or tender than others, and naturally more elated, and have the Humours more accommodated and easie for inflammation, than others, it may easily happen, that in these hot and dry years, than at other times, Princes are sooner and more vehemently stirred up to Contentions, Revenges, and the waging of Warr in the World; and these Warrs oftentimes bring with them the changes of Government or Kingdoms. Thus the learned *Zanchy*. All I have to say here, is: None of the Works of God are to be slighted: and though there be some foundation in Second Causes, yet we are

not to forget the First Cause. We read of fearful sights and great signs that shall be from Heaven, *Luke* 21. 11. If then the Cocks (to use a learned man's phrase) do crow, and these may be judged such; Oh that they might awaken from the sleep of sin, to repenting-work!

Canunt undiq; galli, quando privatim, & publice nos Deus per verbum suum per prodigia & signa ac horribiles insolitosq; rerum casus monet. *Gualtherus* in *Marc* c. 14. Hom. 120.

Secondly, The Presages of *Providence* may be considered in respect of the Matter to which they have a reference. And so they are (1.) Joyous, or by way of mercy. *Noah's* Dove *came in to him in the evening; and lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth*, Gen. 8. 11. So *Hos.* 2. 15. *And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope.* (2.) Doleful, or by way of fore-boading wrath. So the death of *Abijah*, the taking away of him from evil to come, was a sad presage of wrath to come on *Jeroboam's* family, as is declared at large in 1 *King.* 13. The falling of *Dagon* before the Ark, was a fore-runner of the falling of the Lord's heavy hand on the *Philistins*, 1 *Sam.* 5. Other Exemplifications for both these, namely, Presages Joyous and Doleful, are couch't in the fore-going Instances, though not alledged under the notion of this particular Consideration, but under the notion of Presages in the general.

Third-

Thirdly, Presages may be considered in regard of the Subjects or Persons concerned; and so persons may be considered,

1. Singly, or in regard of private capacity, as they respect a person, or particular family, relating to the head of the family. So in *Saul's* case, to whom *Samuel* said, *The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day*, 1 Sam. 15. 28. Other Instances mentioned, fall in here.

2. Conjunctively, or as they respect a Community of persons, a people, who, according as the Presages are, may be the subjects of joy or wo. There are National Mercies, and National Judgments, and Presages to or of each. The distinct handling of each sort of Presages, will fall in with Mercies and Afflictions, which are not here particularly to be insisted on. I pass therefore to the Accommodation or Improvement of the Observation.

CHAP. II.

I LEARN from whence some do give a notable guess at future matters. A due observance of foregoing Dispensations, is a key to unlock the door for an insight into future ones. As some creatures are more sensible of an approaching storm; they are the Husbandman's natural Almanack, and truest one too, *Job* 36. 31. So they who observe

the out-goings of God in the world, may see further than the Politicians of the world. Great ones, who cannot see day at a little hole, are strangely benighted in their designs and undertakings.

2. Observe *Providence* by way of presage, and that the rather, considering, (1.) That so God's Saints have done. As we are not to make presages where no ground is so to do; so we are not to pass by that, the observance whereof may be consistent with wisdom. *Jacob* put not off *Joseph*'s dreams, because dreams, and the dreams of a boy; he gives him the hearing, and observes something more in them than the workings of a childish fancy, *Gen.* 37. 11. (2.) The not heeding of *Providence* in its Præmial displays or presages, may in some cases prove to be of dangerous consequence. *John the Baptist* was the *Elias* to come, he was the fore-runner of the *Messiah*, for so saith he, *Luke*, chap. 1. v. 17. *He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias.* The *Jews* did not heed the *Providence* of God in the *Baptist*, *Mat.* 17. 12. *But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not. But have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them.* Thus the King's Harbinger being not regarded, no wonder if the King himself be not welcom'd. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not*, John 1. 11.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXXI.

Past and present Passages of Providence, *lay foundation, more or less, for future matters: or, What falls out after, is the result or issue of* Providence *before, as effecting or righteously permitting.*

CHAP. I.

THIS *Observation* being akin to the former, the less may be said: yet if the more be said, each of these, like two Glasses, may reflect on each other; and things reflected in them, will the better be taken cognizance of. Before, we considered *Providence* rather as an eye looking forward; here we may look on it as an hand, throwing up the earth, and laying in stones for superstruction-work to go on. There are three Generals to be spoken to here:

1. The various Mode or Manner how past or present passages of *Providence* lay a foundation.
2. The interval of time between the Foundation and after-Superstruction.
3. The Latitude or Extent of this with respect to Matters.

First, To begin then with the first; and so past and present things, in order to what follows, may be considered,

1. According to their intrinsecal and proper nature, their usual manner of working, qualification for what is the ordinary result, as *Providence* is conversant about them. Thus it is said, that *the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain*, 1 King. 18. 44. And so *Eccles.* 7. 7. *Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad, and a gift destroyeth the heart*: that is, impatiency and vexation of mind (as one saith) is a kind of madness, which oppression with its force and nature bringeth, unless a man well principled with piety, flie unto God for shelter and refuge; and after the like sort, *bribery blinds the eyes of a wise man*---

Cartwright in locum.

Again, things may be considered according to a supernatural causality attending them in regard of their issues: and here the said things may be considered (as over-ruled by *Providence*) three ways:

1. As indifferent in their own nature for the production of this or that effect. The Ax cuts the wood, and cuts a man's leg: the same Ax which fells the tree down for fewel or some other use, kills a man at another time, as *Deut.* 19. 5.

2. As having some tendency, inclination, or propensity, for this or that effect; but not proportionable, in it self considered, for the product thereof. *Gideon*'s Three hundred men rout a vast Army, and so lay a foundation for their Countrey's quiet, and respit from the *Midianitish* fury, *Judg.* 7. 3. As

3. As averse and contrariant in all likelihood to what follows. Thus *Joseph*'s brethren rid their Father's house of *Joseph*; which act of theirs, by an over-ruling *Providence*, contributes for the preservation of the Family afterwards; as is asserted by *Joseph*, *Gen.* 45. 9, 10, 11.

There is another consideration of things past and present, in order to futurity; and that is,

1. By way of natural causality; as things according to their very natures physically considered, work thus, as for fire to burn the houses of *Ziglag*, being applied to them, 1 *Sam.* 30. 3.

2. By way of moral causality or order which the Lord hath set. Thus the *Corinthians* did prophane the Lord's Supper: and this lays a moral foundation for a future House of Correction to be erected amongst them: *For this cause* (saith the Apostle) *many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*, 1 Cor. 11. 30. On the other hand, when the Temple-work was minded by them in the Prophet *Haggai*'s time, the laying of the foundation of the Temple, was through grace the laying of a foundation of future Mercies; as is plainly declared in *Hag.* 2. 18, 19.

3. By way both of natural and moral causality. Both these streams meet in one channel sometimes. *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags*, Prov. 23. 21. These sins have not only a moral provocation in them, by reason

whereof God doth righteously punish the sinners; but likewise according to a natural tendency, are an in-let to poverty. Drunkenness (as one saith) turns man, his family, yea his house too, out at the Wicket. Some sins are costly, and are Moths to men's Estates. Men do not only fight against God with their Mercies, but also against their own Estates, Peace, and Comfort. They take the link-stock, fire the Cannons, and have no ground to quarrel with *Providence*, if the Chain-shot, or Wedg heated red-hot in the fire of their lusts, light on their own houses, to the burning of them. And thus for the first general propounded.

Secondly, The interval or space of time betwixt Causes, Effects, and Consequents, comes next to be insisted on. And here, as there is a Winter-grain, and Spring-seed, as Oats, Barley, which are earthed after the former: so some things come to pass after, which were founded in their Causes before. There is a Treasure-house of *Providence*; Mercies and Judgments are laid up in this Treasure-house. The opening of this Treasure-house belongs to God. He times the opening of it.

1. Sometimes there is but a little distance between the issues of Matters, and their Causes. The House is soon up, and covered, whether it be an House of Feasting, or Mourning. A word, and good word, there is for *Jehoshaphat*, with the people, when they are fasting and praying upon the account of that great Multitude which came against them, 2 *Chron.* 20. 17. *To morrow go out against them, for the Lord will*

will be with you. *Elijah* sends word to *Ahab* after a long drought, saying, *Prepare thy Chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.* And it came to pass, that in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds, &c. 1 King. 18. 44, 45. *Boast not thy self of to morrow; thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,* Prov. 27. 1.

2. Otherwhile the distance is wider; Causes and Effects do not shake hands by and by. *Joseph*'s brethren made a Rod for their backs, which hung up by the wall of *Providence* for some years, ere they were lash'd by it in *Egypt*; and *Joseph*'s being sent into *Egypt*, had a reference to the future good of his Father's Family. The Tree was transplanted long before *Jacob*, with his sons, eat of the fruit thereof: for *Joseph* was seventeen years when sold into *Egypt*, *Gen.* 37. 2. and he was thirty years old, when he stood before *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, *Gen.* 41 16. and he tells his brethren, after they find him Lord-Treasurer in *Egypt*, how that two years hath the Famine been in the land, *Gen.* 45. 6. yea, moreover, *Joseph*'s going down into *Egypt*, laid foundation for the *Israelites* going up out of *Egypt* to *Canaan*, according to the prophecy, *Gen.* 15. 13, 14.

Thirdly, The latitude or extent of a foundation for future matters, is next to be spoken unto; and may be considered two ways:

1. In respect of Things.
2. In respect more immediately of Persons.

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1. In respect of things: and so there's a large harvest of Temporals and Spirituals from seed before sown. Not to be here, seeing Instances which may serve have been mentioned materially; and may only here formally be insisted on. Thus *Joseph* is the man sent before, when the Lord called for a Famine upon the Land, and brake the whole staff of bread, as is said *Psal.* 105. 16, 17. Wise-men from the East bring Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrhe, *Mat.* 2. 11. This their Present is of great use for the *Egypt*-Journey at hand: for *Joseph* and they being low in the world, are now the better provided-for in a strange Countrey. The Eye of *Providence* fore-sees future Exigencies; and the Hand of *Providence* is sometimes beforehand by way of provision for the children of *Providence*. Other things might here be insisted in, as in Marriage, Health, Liberty: but I pass to things of spiritual concernment; and so to avoid repetition of what elsewhere is here reducible, I shall only touch on two things: (1.) Conversion to the Faith. (2.) Confirmation in the Faith. There are passages of *Providence* which pave a way to each. God in his *Providence* raiseth up Instruments, whom he sends and blesseth in their Ministry, so that *faith comes by hearing*, as the Apostle doth declare, *Rom.* 10. 15, 17. Words spoken at one time, lay a foundation for confirmation at another: So *John* 2. 22. *When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembred that he had said this unto them;*

and

and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

2. In respect of Persons: And here we may take a view of the All-wise-founding-Providence, as it respects persons Political and Ecclesiastical; or Magistrates and Ministers in God's holy Ordinances.

1. There are passages which refer to persons under a Political consideration: and these may be distinguish't, (1.) As they respect the advancement, promotion, exaltation of persons to places of Power and Dignity. (2.) As they respect the dejection of persons, the clipping their Power and Dignity. That there are matters which may lay some foundation more or less both as to the one and the other, is apparent out of the History (to go no further) of *Paul* and *David*. What these matters in particular are, is subject-matter for a Treatise of *Providence* referring to Politicals.

2. There are passages of *Providence* which respect Ecclesiastical persons, whom God takes near to himself in his service, as was said of the Tribe of *Levi*, *Numb.* 3. 6. These may be distinguish't into such which are,

1. More remote.
2. More near.

To instance in the first, God's preserving of them in the foregoing part of their life, is observable. *Musculus*, when a little one, had the Plague: he dies not, God having work for him to do: he is plague-proof, till the work be done. *Moses* the Lord's Prophet in

in the Old Testament, Christ in the New, are exemplifications of this. Neither Pharaoh the bloody Wolf, nor Herod the old Fox, choak these Lambs in their Infancy, as hath elsewhere been noted upon another Observation.

Again, there are passages of *Providence* more near; as preparation or fitting for the work, and actual calling and disposing them according as God in his *Providence* seeth fit. *Timothy* was nurtured in the knowledge of the Scriptures from a Child, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. To be well verst in the Scriptures, is a good preparative for Divinity. He is after solemnly set apart for publick work of the Ministry, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. The Disciples of Christ were Hearers of Him, before they were Speakers. They had an extraordinary Call as Apostles; and this their receiving the Lord's Press-mony, had a respect to future Service.

More might be said here, as it refers to Persons Ecclesiastical, who as they are Officers in the Church, so may they be spoken of in a Treatise of *Providence* referring to God's Church or People.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE ground for Saints hopes and Sinners fears. There is a Seed-plot both for the one and the other. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoycing, bringing his sheaves with him,* Psal. 126. 5, 6. *Even as I* (saith *Eliphaz* the *Temanite*) *have seen, They that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same: by the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed,* Job 4. 8, 9. The Prophet *Isaiah* comprehendeth both Seed-plots, *Isa.* 26. 20. 21, 21. *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thy self as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be over-past: for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall discover her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

Afflictiones Ecclesiæ velut sationes quædam sunt, quæ tandem dulcem justitiæ, gratiæ, & favoris Dei gustum proferunt; dum videlicet tyrannos reprimit, & suos à servitute liberat. *Moll.*

Quemadmodum semen telluri insinuatum & abditum suo tempore prodit, & terrâ non obtegitur amplius, sed revelatur: sic sanguis innoxius in terram effusus, & corpora piorum occisa, ac tellure adoperta, semen sunt, tempore Domini visitationis ad judicium & condemnationem impiorum proditura. *Musculus* ad locum *Isai.*

2. Observe Foundation-Dispensations of *Providence.* The way to profit more by after-Dispensations of *Providence*, is to take notice of previous or foregoing ones. The reading of the

the Preface to the Book, will conduce to the better understanding of the Book. One skilful in Architecture, will the better judg of the Superstruction, by taking a view how the Foundation of the House is laid. We too often pass by the work of God, as a heap of rubbish at a distance; little considering what the Lord is doing, till afterward we find an House built there, where nothing but an heap of earth lay. It's our wisdom then to observe the display of God's Attributes, in bringing water from this and that Spring-head, by many windings, over many Hills, and through divers Vales; and than to refresh some, and drown others: see *Psal.* 46. 4. with *Isa.* 8. 7.

OBSERVATION XXXII.

PROVIDENCE singly considered with respect to Matters, is an hard Chapter to be understood: but conjunctively, is a good Commentary, or a clear Exposition on this hard Chapter.

CHAP. I.

THAT the comparing of some single act or acts of *Providence*, with an after-act or acts of *Providence* about matters, is the opening of the Casement for light to come in on the understanding, doth appear as followeth.

1. Some have been startled, staggered, nonplust, disquieted, whilst they have been held at a gaze of some act or acts of *Providence* about matters; but, on the other hand, quieted, composed, satisfied, when they have taken a view of the whole of a Dispensation. *Jacob* upon the supposed loss of *Joseph*, talks of nothing but his grave, *Gen.*37.35. but when he saw the Waggons which *Joseph* had sent to carry him, his spirit revived; he said, *It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I dye*, Gen. 45. 27, 28. What an eye-sore was the prosperity of the wicked, solely

solely considered, to the *Psalmist*? But as for me (saith he) *my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipt, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked*, Psal. 73. 2, 3. And in *v.* 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins*: But after, these pangs of disquiet have an end, when he can say, *Then I understood their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction*, v. 17, 18. The two Disciples going to *Emaus*, were nigh-red with sorrow and disquiet, which had almost rid them off their legs of Faith; and that while they cast back an eye on Mount *Calvary*, where their Lord and Master was lately crucified: *We trusted* (say they) *that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*, Luke 24. 21. but after, they are taught a lesson to consider that *Golgotha*-Dispensation as a copulative one, *v.* 26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* They might have been stumbled, if the *Golgotha* Dispensation had not been? for how otherwise should Christ have risen from the grave, triumphed over enemies, fulfilled the Scripture, according as he intimates, *v.* 27.

2. The taking a view of the whole of *Providence* in matters, doth after a natural sort contribute to the better understanding of matters. He that comes into an Artificer's or Joyner's Shop, and sees here and there some pieces for a Box, or into a Taylor's Shop, and beholds here a Skirt, there a Sleeve; may at present, through his want of thorough consideration, be at a loss what to make of these some-

somethings-nothings: but after, when all is set together, there is a proof of the Workmen's skill, and a confutation of the man's ignorance, who knew not what belongs to the Box or Garment. Even thus it is in reference to Providential-Dispensations. Or as the Types of old are better understood when considered in conjunction with what is typed forth by them, as *Numb.* 21. 9. with *John* 3. 14. so this or that act of *Providence* may better be apprehended after, than at present. So Christ tells *Peter*, *What I do, thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter*, John 13. 7.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE one way to prevent guilt of sin under the Dispensations of God, whether they respect our selves or others; and that is by a copulative or conjunctive consideration of *Providence* as to matters. Had *Jonah* waited a while, he need not have been so pettish and froward upon the account of the blasting of his Guord. *Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the guord for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it to grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons, that cannot*

discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattel, Jonah 4. 10, 11. The *Psalmist* likewise acknowledgeth his fault, which the non-consideration of *Providence* conjunctively, was an in-let or door to, *Psal.* 73. 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*

2. Look after a sweet waiting-frame of heart under this and that Dispensation of *Providence*. *Lea, in the way of thy judgments have we waited for thee, O Lord*, Isa. 26. 8. *I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved*, (or, *when I am argued with*, as the Margin hath it) *Hab.* 2. 1. Could persons be so composed when they first set foot on the borders of a Dispensation, as they are, or ought to be, when they have footed it through to the other end; they would foot it cheerfully without faintness and stumbling by the way. We should then in patience possess our selves, till the Lord's work be over. Copulative *Providence* is the Silver Trumpet of God's Praises. *Joseph* beholds a glorious display of the Divine Attributes in God's Dispensation towards him. Suppose him as brought into the great Hall of *Egypt*, hung with Cloath of Arras; at first entry, he sees a Leg or Arm of a man in the Hangings, but after, when he hath liberty to walk up and down there, he sees a beautiful piece of Workmanship: Even so, when

when *Joseph* looks not to the violent hand of his Brethren in the Hangings of *Providence*, but considers all together, he sees the curious Artifice of *Providence* in all, and so tells his Brethren; *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive*, Gen. 50. 20. *Job*, who hath his Scene, and that a sad one too, experienceth all for good in the end. So *James* 5, 11. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

Non est judicandum de Providentiâ Dei ante quintum actum. *Pet. Mart.*

OBSERVATION XXXIII.

PROVIDENCE hath its Harmonies.

CHAP. I.

THOUGH *Providence* seem to sound Discords; yet it hath its Correspondencies or sweet Accords, and that, with

1. The Purpose or Decree of God.
2. The Sacred Scriptures.
3. With the Prayers of Saints.
4. With it Self.

First, There is an Harmony of *Providence* with the Purpose or Decree of God. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts 15. 18. The process of *Providence*, in the sixth Chapter of the *Revelation*, is according to the Book of the Divine Decree spoken of in the fifth Chapter and seventh verse. I enlarge not here, having spoken distinctly and largely to this in a foregoing Observation.

Secondly, There is an Harmony of *Providence* with the Sacred Scriptures. It is said, *Amos* 3 3. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* The Scripture and *Providence* do walk together; they are agreed in the journey's end, where

where to meet; albeit one of them may seem to leave the company of the other for some miles. *Providence*, in regard of its correspondency with the word, may be termed a visible Bible, or a Commentary on it. It may be observed how *Providence* passeth not by this or that as inconsiderable in the word. In *Isa.* 34. there is mention made of the Cormorant, Bittern, Owl, Raven, Vultures, and all these as symptoms or tokens of desolation, *v.* 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Now observe what follows in *v.* 16. *Seek ye out the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail; none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them.*

Now more particularly, The Word may be considered,

1. By way of prediction, or fore-telling matters so strictly or precisely.

2. By way of positive assertion; there are such and such propositions in which this and that are predicated of the subject; as instances frequently do occur in the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, referring to the righteous and the wicked.

3. By way of Commination or Threatning.

4. By way of Promise.

According to all these Considerations *Providence* doth harmonize. Let the Word, according to the fore-mentioned ways, be understood a-right, and *Providence* will not be found a-wrong. The Word and *Providence* are like two sticks in the water, which seem crooked by reason of the *Medium*, or the waters in mo-

tion; and yet neither of them are really so. There is a misapprehension on man's part too often, both in reference to the Word, and *Providence*. These do accord; witness those passages in the word, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken*, Ezra 1.1. *That he might perform his saying which the Lord spake*, 1 King. 12.15. and the like. There must needs indeed be an accord between the Word and *Providence*, seeing Infinite Power, Wisdom, Truth, Justice, do make up the match. God will not be wanting in his *Providence* to maintain the reputation of his Word: yea, the harmony of *Providence* is sometimes so audible, that a *Pagan* ear can discern it. *The Captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place: now the Lord hath brought it, and done according as he hath said*, Jer. 40. 2, 3. See *Deut.* 29. 24, 25.

Thirdly, There is an Harmony of *Providence* with the Prayers of Saints. So 1 Joh. 5.14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* There are many Exemplifications for this both in the Old and New Testament. Mention may after be made of Exemplifications, and likewise somewhat be spoken concerning the answer to prayers, in a distinct following Observation. Here it may suffice, that the accord of *Providence* with Prayer, may be distinguish't,

1. Into a Negative one, and yet without a contradiction. Foundation for this, we have in *Amos* 7. the Prophet there hath a Vision of Grashop-

Grashoppers; and hereupon he prays, *O Lord forgive, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob arise! for he is small.* The reply to this prayer we have v. 3. *The Lord repented for this: it shall not be, saith the Lord.*

2. There is a positive accord of *Providence* with Prayer; not only what shall not be, but what shall be, hath its accord with Prayer. *Elias prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months: and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit*, Jam. 5. 17, 18.

Fourthly, There is an Harmony of *Providence* with it self. *Providence*, for the main, is the same in all Ages. A man's head and face are still the same, though his hair be cut, and his beard be shaven, and his apparel or garb different. There is a substantial Harmony of *Providence* with *Providence*. If the Harmony be not a literal one, or for kind the same; yet there is an Harmony in regard of the general nature, as it is either frowning or smiling. Otherwise, To what end are the Dispensations of God in former Ages commended to the serious meditation of others in after-ages? *Now these things* (saith *Paul*) *were our examples, to the intent, we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted: neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sate down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as*

some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Moreover, here let it be weighed, how *Providential* Dispensations are streams issuing from the Word; whether considered as unwritten before *Moses* his days, or written as after. Smiling Dispensations, and frowning ones, are the births of Promises and Threatnings. If then the Word of God be Heaven's standing-rule for man's use, and that as it hath both Promises and Threats annexed, *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. 2 Tim. 3. 16. the *Providence* of God then must have its standing-harmony with *Providence*. Some difference there may be as the state of man is considered before the fall of our first Parents, and as God of old did prescribe some Rules to the *Jews*, with which his *Providence* did keep pace; and likewise in respect of the Lord's more immediate owning and ruling that people: A difference there is in these and such like respects; but yet not such as doth overturn the Harmony of *Providence* with *Providence*: *Providence* now hath its Harmony formal in some things; equivalent in other things with *Providence* in times of the Old Testament.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. WHAT a vanity and folly is it then for persons to busie themselves about other pretended Harmonies? If there be such bread in the Father's House, what have the Children to do with husks? There are a sort of bastard-Harmonies cry'd up, and doted on, which want a Scripture-legitimation. These, like Worms, eat away the kernel of men's thoughts and affections from better things, and so leave an empty shell; which, though it do not break the teeth in cracking, yet defiles the mouth by the putrify'd stuff in it.

1. There is the pretended Harmony of things with Judicial Astrological Predictions, which are not founded on right Reason, or general Experience. Some make bold to bring forth the Decrees of the Starr-Chamber as touching the bent of men's minds, the deaths of persons, &c. as if so be there were not a secret Council-Table within the be-spangled Canopy of Heaven. There is little reason, and less grace, for men to be curiously searching

Porrò Astrologi & quicunque alii divinatores, qui quasi similiæ Dei videri volunt, omnino deridendi sunt. Nec enim fieri potest ut de rebus futuris contingentibus ac præsertim liberis vera prædicent, nisi forte aliquando casu veritatem attingant; nam cum omnibus causis necessariis, contingentibus, liberis, voluntas Dei præsideat & præ-emineat, & possit causas inferiores, quando libuerit impedire; nemo vera prædicere potest, nisi cui Deus voluntatem suam manifestare voluerit, ut sæpe prophetis suis manifestavit. *Bellar.* in opusc. de ascensione mentis ad Deum. qu. 12.

after

after some Fopperies in Almanacks, and this to the neglect of their Bibles, which will never be out of date. If men would search into the later, as they do into the former, they might read of an *Esau* and a *Jacob*, twins-born, but of a different character, *Gen.* 25. 23. They might read of many thousands dying a violent death nigh one and the same time, *Judg.* 8. 10. and if an *Astrologer* had been consulted, is it likely that he had made such a difference as to *Esau* and *Jacob*, and such an Harmony of the deaths of an Hundred and twenty thousand, as the last Scripture mentions? Again, they might read, *that promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south*, Psal. 75. 6. Furthermore, they might read a Sacred insulting Irony, *Let now the astrologers, the starr-gazers, the monthly-prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee*, Isa. 43. 13. Lastly, They might peruse a Dehortatory Lesson, *Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathens are dismayed at them*, Jer. 10. 2.

2. There is another bastard Harmony in regard of particular blind Prophecies cast forth from Wizards and Witches, the Oracles of the Devil. There is in some a wicked Curiosity to know their Fortune, as it is phrased. If such would know their Fortune, they might take shorter and surer course by reading the 28 ch. of *Deuteronomy*: or, if they like not so large a Discourse, they may have it in short from Christ,

Christ, who tells them, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*, Mark 16. 16. It is often a suspicious sign of hardness of heart, and a judiciary deserting by the Lord, when thus the Oracles of the Devil are in request with parties. *Seek me out* (said *Saul* to his servants) *a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her*, 1 Sam. 28. 7. and what got he, but further sorrow and wo? see ver. 20.

Perhaps it will be objected here by some, That Prophecies, so termed, do fall out true; and therefore why are they not to be look't after?

To this thred-bare Objection, note the following Reply, and that in divers particulars.

1. Why are not things observed to fall out otherwise ordinarily? "An *Astrologer* or *Star-peeper* (saith *Luther*) is to be likened to one "who selleth Dice, and saith, Behold here I "have Dice that always run upon Twelve; "the rest of the fifty Casts upon 2,3,4,5,6,7, "8,9,10,11. Even thus it is with *Astrologers*: "When once or twice their Conceits and "Fantasies do hit and happen, then they can-"not sufficiently extol and praise the Art; "but touching the other so oftentimes failing, "they are altogether still and silent. Thus *Luther*. And indeed it's no wonder if sometimes

Sciunt illi (dæmones) quidem futura multa, sed non omnia, quippe quibus penitus consilium Dei scire non licet: & ideo solent responsa in ambiguos exitus temperare. *Lact.* lib. 2. Instit. cap. 15.

that

that which is spoken (and yet it may be in the general, or in an ambiguous sense) do thus or thus fall out. Suppose divers in *Israel* had had recourse to Witches, or others, to enquire what weather should have been on the morrow, when *Samuel* said, *Is it not wheat-harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain*, 1 Sam. 12 17. Perhaps, none had hit right: suppose one had amongst many (for some kind of weather must be); now this one speaks the truth, but not truly; having no ground, but as the blind man shoots the Hare.

2. Whether some kind of Predictions may have some influence by way of a kind of natural causality, to bring about what is said. A true Prophecy may have some influence in an ordinary way to further the accomplishment of it self: so 2 *King.* 9. the Prophecy there was the occasion at least for the Army-men to set up *Jehu*. And so, on the other hand, some passages heeded may be inductive of the thing. A man hath a strong conceit of death, he is foretold so; and this phancy may, through *Providence* righteous *Amen*, have its deadly operation.

3. Satan can give notable intelligence to some who are his Oracles: For,

Angeli in verbo Dei cognoscunt omnia, antequam in re fiant: & quæ apud homines adhuc futura sunt, Angeli jam revelante Deo, noverunt; prævaricatores Angeli etiam sanctitate amissa, non tamen amiserunt vivacis creaturæ Angelicæ sensum: triplici enim modo præscientiæ acumine vigent; scilicet subtilitate naturæ, experientiâ temporum, revelatione superiorum potestatum. *Isid.* Hisp. lib. 1. sent. c. 12.

1. He is an Angel, and so hath a deeper insight

insight into matters. Though there may be some crack in his natural intellectuals by his fall; yet, as an Angel, he sees further into matters: see 2 *Sam.* 14. 17.

2. He hath had long experience as to matters in the world: He is an old Serpent, *Rev.* 12. 9.

3. He can quickly take cognizance of the position of matters, how things are in their precedent Causes both Natural and Moral. Thus supposing that it was the Devil in *Samuel*'s Mantle, no wonder if he speaks as he doth: for *David* was anointed, *Saul* grows worse and worse; and now the top-stone-Sinne, was laid on, namely, his going to a Witch, and a battel was at hand to be fought.

4. The Devil hath a great stroak in matters brought about in the World. He that is then an Agitator, may the better be an Intelligencer. See 1 *King.* 22. 21, 22. *Job* 1. 12. Satan could know what would befall *Ahab* and *Job*, when he had a Commission, or rather a Permission, what to do.

4. God hath wise Ends in the verification of what is sometimes foretold. That place in *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3. is a full one for this purpose. *Providence* forbears not to go the journey, because *Satan* doth so probably guess, and give it out: yea, *Providence* sets forward the rather for the trial of persons. And therefore let that pertinent instruction be

be remembred, *Isa.* 8. 19, 20. *And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

3. There is a specious expected Harmony of *Providence* with Scriptures misunderstood. It may be said here to some, as Christ said, *Mat.* 22. 29. *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* The *Jews* look for a *Messiah*; they are zealous for *Moses*, and hot against Christ. What the Apostle said of the *Jews* in his days [*But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart*, 2 Cor. 3. 15.] the same may be said of their posterity. Others there are, who (through error) fasten that on *Providence* to make good, which may never be. A pertinent passage for this purpose, we have John 21. 23. *Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, That that disciple should not dye: yet Jesus said not to him, He shall not dye; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* This then is another false Harmony of *Providence*; and of this matter more is said elsewhere.

II. Learn to depart from evil, and do good, according to that in *Psal.* 34. 14. The moving-consideration is drawn from the Har-

Harmony of *Providence*, which is two-fold:

1. Joyous, ſprightful, or gracious.
2. Doleful, or grievous.

This double Harmony of *Providence* ſeems to be pointed at in the *Pſalm* now mentioned: for in the fifteenth verſe it is ſaid, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.* They then who would have the eye of God on them for good, and his ear open to their prayer, muſt ſee they depart from evil, and do good: they are not to have a deaf ear to this voice of the Lord. Again in verſe 16 it is ſaid, *The face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Providence* will frown on ſuch who ſmile on ſin.

There is then encouragement from the Harmony of *Providence*, both in a way of Mercy and Wrath, to depart from evil, and do good. And whatever ſeeming-contrariety there is in regard of the proſperity of ſinners, and the adverſity of pious ones; yet it is a ſtanding-truth, That Joyous or Gracious *Providence* is the portion of godly ones; and Doleful or Grievous *Providence* is the lot of wicked ones. The one have ſmiles in their frowns; and the other, real frowns in their ſmiles. Conſonant to this is that in the eighth of *Eccleſiaſtes*, and the twelfth verſe; *Though a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his*

his days be prolonged, yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. To this of the Preacher, add that of the Prophet: *Say unto the righteous, That it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, for it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him,* Isa. 3. 10, 11.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXXIV.

PROVIDENCE hath its Contraries: or, There is a Checker-Table of Providence, *wherein are the Whites of Serenity, and the Blacks of Adverſity.*

CHAP. I.

THAT there is ſuch a neighbourhood of Whites and Blacks in the Diſpenſations of the Almighty, may be proved, if conſideration be had to the following heads of Diſcourſe.

Firſt, There are Similies, Alluſions, or Illuſtrations of this in Scripture. The Wind of Providence keeps not at one point of the Compaſs, So Eccleſ. 1. 6. *The wind goeth towards the ſouth, and turneth about towards the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. I ſaw* (ſaith *Daniel*) *in my viſion by night, and behold the four winds of the heaven ſtrove upon the great ſea*, Dan. 7. 2. That notion of a Wheel, *Ezek.* 1. 15. doth ſet forth the rolling or turning-condition of things in the World. How often likewiſe is there an alluſion to the Sea, Dan. 7. 2. *Rev.* 15. 2. We read of two notable

Sea-voyages of the Disciples of Christ, in which they might learn how the Church of Christ may have storms and calms, *Mat.* 8. 24. and *Mat.* 14. 22.

Secondly, These are Cautions, Dehortations, Comminations, on the one hand; and Exhortations, Encouragements, Promises, on the other; which do imply this neighbourhood of Whites and Blacks of *Providence*. So in Isa. 1. 19, 20. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* I might be large here: it may suffice to point at places: see *Deut.* 28. *Josh.* 24. 1 *Sam.* 12. 24, 25. *Psal.* 34. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Psal. 13. 34, 35.

Thirdly, The Prayers of God's People in Scripture do declare this. The 90th Psalm is stiled, *A Prayer of Moses the man of God.* Observe passages there. *Return O Lord, how long?* and, *Let it repent thee now concerning thy servants. O satisfie us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoyce and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.* 13, 14, 15. *Daniel's* prayer, *chap.* 9. looks backward on the *Jews* past both prosperous state, and afflicted state, for seventy years, and looks forward on a merciful Dispensation at hand.

Fourthly, There are certain Doxologies in Scripture, which take in this as matter of celebration or acknowledgment: So 1 *Sam.* 2. The

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled, are girt with strength: they that were full, have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry, ceased: so that the barren hath born seven, and she that hath many children, is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up: he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghil, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. Thus *Hannah* in her Song of Thankfulness. See likewise the Doxology of *Nebuchadnezzar*, Dan. 4. 34, 35, 36, 37. and of *Mary* the Mother of Jesus, *Luke* 2. 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54.

Fifthly, There is something as an adjunct oftentimes coupled with Adversity, and with Prosperity; by reason or order of which, as precedaneous, a door is thrown open both for the one and the other. Here is indeed a Shop of Exchange. Adversity, through a gracious *Providence*, makes way for Prosperity; and Prosperity, through a righteous *Providence* visiting for Prosperity-sins, makes way for Adversity. *Manasseh*, a King, sins himself from his Throne: in his affliction he sought God, was humbled greatly: the Lord was entreated of him, and brought him again to *Jerusalem* into his Kingdom, 2 *Chron.* 33. 11, 12, 13. Pertinent for this purpose, is that in *Ps.* 107. *fools, because of their transgression, and because of*

their iniquities, are afflicted: their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw neare to the gates of death: then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses, v. 17, 18, 19.

Sixthly, There is a Divine Constitution of Heaven for wise Ends, why this is so, and shall be so. *Solomon* tells of a day of Prosperity, and a day of Adversity; and moreover affixeth this, saying, *God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him*, Eccles. 7.14. Adversity (saith one) is set opposite to Prosperity, a Vale against a Hill, in a continual vicissitude and succession; and this is done to the end, or in such order and manner, that man should, or shall, find nothing after him, *viz.* of those things that may come upon him in the course of his life, and after-times: he cannot by wit fore-see, nor by policy prevent, ensuing changes; and therefore it is a great part of his wisdom to arm himself with patience for all adventures.

Mr. *Pemble*.

Si tristia semper accederent, quis sustineret? si semper prospera, quis non contemneret? sed rerum tanta gubernatrix sapientia horum perneccessariâ vicissitudine eo moderamine electis suis cursum vitæ temporalis alternat, ut nec adversa fragant, nec læta dissolvant, cum potius & ista ex illis gratiora, & illa ex his tolerabiliora reddantur. *Bern.* in Epistola ad *Petrum* Papiensem.

In this Constitution of Heaven for an intermixture of Dispensations, three things are observable:

1. Here is a display of the Divine Attributes intended. Not only is Wisdom seen in

the

the allay of Prosperity by Adversity, and of Adversity by Prosperity; but likewise Goodness, Power, Justice, have their glorious Manifesto's or Displays, according to particular concernments of persons, whose day is a black-cloudy, or a bright Sun-shine one. Not only the Word, but Providence, and that in Dispensations of this nature, do witness, that *the Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, and transgression; and by no means clearing the guilty: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation*, Numb. 14. 18.

In the next place, The Lord by this intermixture of Whites and Blacks in the course of his *Providence*, will make trial of persons. They shall have change of pastures. One while the grass is very low; another while a fresh leeze is broken up for them. The *Israelites* in the Wilderness are suffer'd to hunger, and yet are fed with Manna; and all this to prove them, *Deut.* 8 2, 3.

Lastly, God will hereby put a distinction between Earth and Heaven. This World sings Changes. Heaven's Serenity is never overcast with a black Cloud. The Apostle *Paul* is admirable in the *antithesis* or opposition he makes, on this wise; here, *affliction*; there, *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Here, an *earthly house of this tabernacle*; there, *a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. and chap. 5. v. 1. Yea, wicked men will find a difference between their state here, and their state

hereafter; so *Luke* 16. 25. *But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

CHAP. II.

Nos verò sic lætari debemus, ut non immergamur, sed servemus partem cordis Deo, quâ etiam ferre possimus diem malum; sic fiet, ut mala prævisa minus discrucient nos. *Luth.* in *Eccles.* cap. 7.

1. BE not secure because of a present Tranquillity, or Sun-shine of *Providence* in matters. The Horse goes well over the Plain; a rough way is at hand, where it may stumble, and dismount the Rider: yea, it may happen, the Horse may trip on the Plain; some little hillock, or loose stone in the way, may occasion a fall. *And in my prosperity I said* (but God said not so, though *David* said so) *I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*, Psal. 30. 6, 7.

Sed nos immergimur penitus vel lætis vel adversis; pii verò ubi boni & mali vicissitudinem patiuntur, dicunt: Hic Dei ordo sive mos est, neq; frangantur. *Ibid.*

2. Give not way to a despondency under Adversity. Though the man stand in the Black, he may by-and-by be in the White. Note here four things: (1.) There is an evil of Despondency under evils of Smart. (2) Good persons, yea, eminently good, are incident to some grumblings or touches at least

heft of this Diſeaſe. (3.) Parties notwithſtanding their black Concluſions from the Poſture of their Affairs, may experience God's kindneſs. (4.) Perſons may even then be neareſt Mercy, or Mercy neareſt them, when they deem it furtheſt off. So 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *And David ſaid in his heart, I ſhall now periſh one day by the hand of Saul.* Obſerve here, (1.) Who ſaid? *David*, a Saint, and an eminent one too. (2.) What did he ſay? *I ſhall periſh one day by the hand of Saul.* Did this [*one day*] ever come? No; for *David* lived to ſee the day of *Saul's* death. (3.) When was it that *David* ſaid as he did? Even then when *Saul's* glaſs was nigh done, a few ſands to run: ſo that he who did conclude his life would be concluded by *Saul's* violence; he that talks of falling by the hand of *Saul*, hears tidings of *Saul's* falling by the hand of the *Philiſtins*, 1 *Sam.* 30. with 2 *Sam.* 1. chap.

3. Take a view of the Checker-Table of *Providence*; obſerve the revolutions that are in the world; let not the Whites and Blacks be paſſed over without a good improvement. It is ſaid, *Deut.* 8. 2. *And thou ſhalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee theſe forty years in the wilderneſs*---Note here, how it's the *Iſraelites* duty to call to remembrance, or keep up in memory the way, and all the ways of God's Diſpenſations towards them: they, in their Wilderneſs-journey, had ups and downs; Mercies and Judgments were attendants; and they are not to forget what might profitably be learn't in the company of ſuch attendants on them in the Wilderneſs.

There are, moreover, two inducements, why persons should take a view of this Checker-Table: (1.) It's plain or obvious to men's eyes. The Whites and Blacks of the Lord's Dispensations are the more visible. The walk of *Providence* from one point to a diametrically oppofite point, or from the Hill to the Vale, and from the Vale to the Hill, bespeaks men to be sand-blind, or pur-blind, if it be not noted. Thus it's implied in *Luke* 1. *He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree; he hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away*, v. 52, and 53. They then are very deaf, or have an injudicious ear, who hear not the loud Bell of *Providence* in such changes which befal themselves or others. (2.) As this Checker-table is plain or obvious to the eye; so is it a large one. There are many whites and blacks. There are not only the whites and blacks in regard of Temporals, but also in regard of Spirituals. Our Saviour tells the Jews, saying, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*, Mat. 21. 43. A wonderful change! and that reciprocal or mutual, as it respects different subjects, there is this way; according to that in *Hos.* 1. 10. ----*And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.* Again, these whites and blacks not only in respect of persons singly considered; but in respect of a Community or Society of persons. That passage, ---*that there*

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be no complaining in our ſtreets, Pſal. 144. 14. doth imply the different ſtate of a Nation in regard of Temporal Mercies. We read in *Acts* 9. 31. *Then had the Churches reſt thorowout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria,*--- And we read likewiſe, how the Reſt there was not an everlaſting one, *Acts* 12. 1.

4. Long then for an Heaven, or the Everlaſting Reſt. There is no ſuch Checker-table there. Be willing, however, that this Sacred Game of *Providence* be at an end. Beware of fooliſh paſſion, and irregular deſires of death. Let God alone to time all. The longeſt Game of *Providence* here in matters, will have its end. Meditate on that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *For we that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened; not that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon; that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.*

OB SER-

OBSERVATION XXXV.

One and the same Providence *hath sometimes its Blacks and Whites:* or, *There is both Honey and Gall wrapt up in a Dispensation, considered as a mixt one.*

CHAP. I.

THIS Observation, however it may seem a Paradox; yet is such an one, which may be cleared up as Orthodox, and that if we consider,

1. Exemplifications from Scripture.
2. The various wise Ends which God hath in mix't Dispensations.

1. There are many Exemplifications of this Verity. *Noah* must change his habitation, be shut up in the Ark as in a Prison: There are beasts within, for his fellow-Prisoners; and sad desolations without, amongst the Beasts, and Men, the worse Beasts in a moral sense: all this is afflictive. But yet his being in the Ark in order to his preservation, was a signal favour; for so the Lord gives him to understand, *Gen.* 7. 1. with *Gen.* 6. 8. *Lot* is taken

ken prisoner, but not slain, *Gen.* 14. 13. *Joseph* had a Prison-palace, or a Palace-prison, *for the Lord was with him, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison*, Gen. 31. 21. *Moses* is cast as an Exile into the Land of *Midian*, and there God provides for him, *Exod.* 2. 21. God takes away *David*'s Child by death, who might have proved as an upbraiding Monument of *David*'s shame, so an occasion of Warr in the Kingdom, 2 *Sam.* 12. *Jonah* is swallowed by a Whale, *Jon.* 1. 17. the fish's belly is his house of prayer; and *Jonah*'s prayer is a prevailing one: he who had a providential ingress, hath a glorious egress; *The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land*, Jon. 2. 10. Our Saviour tells his Disciples, saying, *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter shall not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you*, Joh. 16. 7. *Paul* must suffer shipwrack, and yet none of their lives in the Ship are lost, *Acts* 27. 44. The same Man of God hath a thorn in the flesh, a Messenger of Satan to buffet him; yet this thorn is to open a passage for whatever Imposthumed-pride was gathered to an head: The Devil, an unclean Spirit, becomes providentially a sanctifying one in a sense. God knows how to make the Devil do a good choar for a Saint, whilst the Devil intends his own work. *Paul* was of this belief, as he professeth, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

2. There are various wise ends in such mix't Dispensations: Amongst others, we may cast an

an eye on these. (1.) Sometimes he makes a display of fatherly displeasure. There is a Rod, but it is a gentle one; *Thou shalt not dye, but the child shall surely dye*, said *Nathan* to *David*, 2 Sam. 12. 13, 14. (2.) God will hereby wisely exercise the graces of his people, as their faith and patience, by the bitter part of the Dispensation; and their love to him, admiration of him, and thankfulness for favour by the sweeter part of the Dispensation. Thus *Epaphroditus* sickness, yet not death; and *Paul*'s danger of being devoured by the *Roman* Lion, had their influences on their graces, according to the interwoven mixture in these Dispensations, *Phil.* 2. 27. 2 *Tim.* 4. 16, 17. (3.) Hereby the Lord wisely consults an Antidote and Remedy against two Evils, namely, Pride and Despondency. *Jacob* is not to be dejected; he is a Prevailer: he is not to be elated; for he halted upon his thigh, *Gen.* 32. 28, 31. God's Dispensations are like well-levell'd Cannons, which beat upon Pride and Despondency, and so make sweeping-work with each of these files at once. (4.) The Lord teacheth the correspondency of his *Providence* with his *Word*. We are lesson'd not to slight Heaven's Rod, which hath its smarting-blow: and not to faint, for its blow is from a Father, not an implacable Enemy, see *Prov.* 3. 11, 12. (5.) Hereby God will put a difference betwixt Earth and Heaven. *Paul* will have no need of a Thorn in the flesh, when he is taken Tenant to the Heavenly Inheritance. The joys of Saints in Heaven will run like a Crystal River, without mix-

mixture of mud or dirt. *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*, Rev. 7. 17.

CHAP. II.

LEARN what a wiſe God the Chriſtian hath for his God. The great Phyſician of Heaven ſo attemperateth the Phyſick, as that it ſhall bear upon various ill humours. With one and the ſame Beeſom *Providence* ſweepeth the Saints houſe clean, to the joy and rejoycing of the Saint. The Ship is ſo managed, as that it neither overturns for want of ballaſt, nor ſinks into the ſea by reaſon of burthen. God doth balance the hearts of men, as well as balance the clouds over the heads of men, as is ſaid *Job* 37.16. *He is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of juſtice: he will not afflict*, v. 23. And in Jer. 10. 24. *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, leſt thou bring me to nothing.*

2. Beware then of fixing an eye only on the more gaſtly part of a Diſpenſation. View the bright ſide as well as the dark ſide of thy Cloud. There are two things here conſiderable:

1. It is very rational or equitable, that a proportionable ſurveigh ſhould be taken of a Diſpenſation. *Hezekiah*, after he had heard the Prophet's heavy tydings, ſaith, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou haſt ſpoken, for there ſhall be peace and truth in my days*, Iſa. 39. 8.

2. As

2. As there is a robbing of the Lord in respect of his goodness and mercy in eying only the bitter part, as bitter, in Dispensation; so a person in so doing stands in the light of his own support and comfort. He that can read Love, Mercy, Wisdom, in the Characters of *Providence*, though written with the intermixture of Gall in their black Ink, will not tear in pieces the Letter sent from Heaven. The Prophet *Jeremiah* gives a large description of Miseries, *Lam.* 3. from *v.* 1. to 21. and in *v.* 22. what saith he? *It is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* Here is a sense of Mercies as well as before a sense of Miseries; and a good use is made of this in *v.* 26. *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.*

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXXVI.

There is a Retaliating-work, or work of rendring like for like, observable in God's dealing with the Sons of men.

CHAP. I.

THIS Retaliating-work of *Providence* may be considered both by way of frown and smile; or, as grievous in a way of smart, and gracious in a way of favour. Each of these have a correspondence with what is foregoing either by way of proportion literal (if I may so term it), there is a Copy or Counterpane of the former Deed; or (as is vulgarly said) *the same bread which men break to others, is broken to them again:* or by way of proportion equivalent, or in value. God doth sometimes pay persons in the like coyn; sometimes the payment is made in Bullion, which though it have not the like Image or Superscription on it, yet it comes out of the same Mine, though not the same Mint. There is a general accord with what did precede, and that (as was said) by way of frown and smile. For the further clearing up of this Meditation or Observation, the following Heads of Discourse offer themselves to consideration.

First,

First, There are Assertions in Scripture in this wise: These Assertions are,

1. General.
2. Particular.

1. The Assertions general which do point at this, are to be spoken to. And here, not to be large, hear what He asserteth, whose word may well be taken, Christ himself: *Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judg, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measur'd to you again,* Mat. 7. 1, 2. Compare this Scripture with Luke 5. 37, 38. and we have the Text, or Subject-matter, enlarged: for thus it is said, *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*

2. There are Assertions in particular, and that as they point at frowning-Dispensations and smiling-ones. The first sort of Assertions in particular, as they respect wrath, we have scattered up and down in Scripture. So Isa. 33. 1. *Wo to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they deal not treacherously with thee: when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.* Rev. 13. 10.

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He that leadeth into captivity, ſhall go into captivity: he that killeth with the ſword, muſt be killed with the ſword.

The later ſort of Aſſertions in particular we have likewiſe on Sacred Record. So *Pſal.* 41. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble: the Lord will preſerve him, and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him to the will of his enemies: the Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing; thou wilt make his bed in ſickneſs*, v. 1,2,3. To this add one Scripture more, *Pſal.* 18.25. *With the merciful thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf merciful: with the upright thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf upright.* And that in Mat. 5.7. *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy.*

Secondly, The Prayers that are in Scripture recorded, do imply a Retaliating-work of *Providence*. There are Sacred or Divinely-inſpired reflections on the evil and good deeds of perſons; and theſe reflections have reached Heaven for an anſwer: ſo in *Pſal.* 137. 7. *Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jeruſalem, who ſaid, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.* So likewiſe, Lam. 1. 22. *Let all their wickedneſs come before thee; and do unto them as thou haſt done unto me for all my tranſgreſſions: for my ſighs are many, and my heart faint.* And Rev. 6.7. *And they cryed with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judg and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

Again, there are paſſages in Prayer of ano-

ther aspect or reflection. *Boaz answered and said to Ruth, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given to thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust,* Ruth 2. 11, 12. *The Lord* (said *Paul*) *give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain,* 2 Tim. 1. 18.

Thirdly, There are Exemplifications of a Retaliating-work; and that,

1. By way of Wrath, or Judgment, or Severity.
2. By way of Mercy.

1. To begin with the first sort: The first-born of *Egypt* were slain, and that very righteously, if consideration be had to the bloody Edict for the destroying the male-children of the *Israelites*; and look, as Orders were issued out to drown the children of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*'s River; so *Pharoah* with his Host are drowned in the Red-sea, *Exod.* 1. 16, and *v.* 22. with *Exod* 12. 29. and *Exod.* 14. 30. *Samuel* tells *Agag*, *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women; and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal*, 1 Sam. 15. 23. Vengeance is for *Edom*; and why? Because that *Edom* hath dealt

dealt against the house of *Judah* by taking vengeance, *Ezek.* 25. 12, 13, 14. *O Jerusalem* (said Christ) *which killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee--- behold now your house is left unto you desolate*, Luke 13. 34, 35. It is said, Rev. 16. 6. *--for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.* And in Rev. 18. 6. *Reward her, even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.* Many instances are there in Civil and Ecclesiastical History, which do abundantly witness this. It may be observed how the sins of Fraud, Perjury, Oppression, Blood, are written in Capital Characters on the foreheads of after-punishments.

The next sort of Exemplifications come to be spoken to. The Midwives, who did not set their hands to pull down the props of the *Israelitish* houses (I mean, the Male-children), have houses made for them, *Exod.* 1. 21. God's making of them houses there, may be understood in regard of propagation or encrease of posterity; their Vines spread, who did not destroy the young Plants: or in regard of Honour; their Houses or Families are made illustrious: They who honoured God, and his people too, in an afflicted condition; are honoured by God. Or, lastly, in regard of wealth or prosperous estate; they are blest with a confluence of good things, who would not be instrumental to rob the *Israelites* of their best

living goods. *Lot* shews kindness to Angels in the shape of men, and he who would defend his Guests, is defended by them, *Gen.* 19. 1, &c. *David* shews kindness to *Mephibosheth* for *Jonathan*'s sake; having received kindness from the Father, he makes conscience of paying of the debt of kindness to the Son, 2 *Sam.* 9. 7.

There are Exemplifications of this verity in History. That relation Mr. *Fox* makes of *Frescobalt* a Merchant of *Florence*, is pertinent here. He was very bountiful to *Cromwel*, after Lord Chancellor of *England*; and found the counterpain of his bounty in *Florence*, at *London:* for coming thither to get in some moneys due to him in *England*, he being now in a low estate, finds one high enough, namely, the said Lord, for his help and relief. By the assistance of the Chancellor, his debts due are paid: and the money which this Merchant gave, or rather lent, to the other, being in a mean and distressed condition, is refunded with noble Interest, *viz.* Eight hundred Duckats for about Fifty, disbursed in order to *Cromwel*'s return to *England*. In the Life of that famous Preacher in his Age, *Lavater*, there is a memorable story of *Providence* in retaliating kindness for kindness to *Lavater* his Father. He being a Military-man, had compassion on a common Soldier labouring under great extremity by reason of thirst at a very hot season: though he were an Officer of note, yet he took cognizance of a distressed Soldier, and liberally refresh't him with a draught

draught of Wine which he had by him in ſome veſſel at that time. It happens, about eight years after, that *Lavater* in a certain fight falls into a Ditch or Trench where many had periſhed; neither was there any hope that he ſhould get out from thence: but behold, that very Soldier put forth his hand in the very ſight of the Enemies, with great danger of his life, and plucks *Lavater* from the jaws of death; who is now delivered, and after returns home to his Command, and enquires who it was that ſo hazzarded himſelf for him, wills the man to come before him, asks him, what was the reaſon he ſo jeoparded his life. The Soldier replies, Becauſe thou ſome years heretofore, when I was likely to periſh by reaſon of thirſt, in *Italy*, didſt relieve me in my extremity. In the Life of learned and pious *Junius*, it is mentioned, how being at a great diſtance from his friends, and Warr breaking forth in *France*, ſo that he could not have moneys ſent him; he was in very great want, ſo that he was reſolved to dig for a Livelihood in the City-trench of *Geneva*, and ſo relieve himſelf that way, taking what time he could otherwhile to follow his Book. Being thus diſtreſſed, one *William Burdo*, who was a Taylor there, having been out in the Civil Warrs of *France*, and lately eſcaped with his life, takes notice of *Junius* going from a Sermon; and doubtful whether it were *Junius*, who was

now in a poor condition as to sight, asks him, who was asham'd to discover himself, and so finds him to be his Countrey-man, hath him to his Lodging, telling him he would work to get enough for a subsistence, knowing he should be paid again from *Junius* his friends: and so he did, and was induced so to do, considering what kindness his Mother (being a Widow-woman, and having many Children) had received from *Junius* his Mother, who was a religious and bountiful Matron, and did daily send relief to the Widow-woman and her Children, living near her house. One of her Children was this *William*, who now is an helper to him, whose Mother had been an helper. Who knows to whom he may be beholding to one time or other! Good acts of Charity are Bills of Exchange, when no money is in the Purse. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, Prov. 19. 17.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

IN reference then to Frowning-Retaliations of *Providence*, observe these following Documents.

1. There is ground to repent for Injuries done to others. There may be a sad reckoning of *Providence* behind. They who imbitter others lives, may have their lives imbittered by others. The King of *Nineveh* with his Nobles act wisely, when it is thus enacted; *Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands*, Jonah 3. 8. The success of humbling and reforming-work, is made mention in the tenth verse.

2. Acknowledg God's righteous hand, when the evil of our sins are written thus on the fore-heads of our Smarts. An *Adonibezek* feels the righteous hand of *Providence* in his thumbs cut off; and the trampling foot of *Providence*, in treading on, yea off, his great toes: *As I have done, so God hath requited me*, saith he, *Judg.* 1. 6, 7.

3. There is hope of the Lord's helping persons under the furies of men, from the consideration of Retaliating-Providence. So *Psal.* 137. 8. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.* Obad. *v.* 15. *For*

the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head. See also *Rev.* 18. 20, with 24.

4. Beware of unrighteous acts towards others, whether Magistrates, Ministers, Parents, Husbands, Wives, Widows, Fatherless. It is storied of an aged man, who being barbarously dragged by the hair of the head, desired his son (who abused him) he would not drag him beyond such a place of the house, for that he did not so to his Father. It's said, how some second Husbands pay home the first Husbands scores; and so of Wives too often it is experienced. The people of *Israel* refused to obey the voice of *Samuel* their Governour, and they smarted for it, 1 *Sam.* 8 19. They who slight good Ministers, may be punish't with bad ones. There may be Watch-men which may smite some for their smiting, and wound for their wounding, *Cant.* 5. 7. That is a notable caution given, *Exod.* 22. *Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child; if thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless,* verse 22, 23, 24.

II. In reference to Smiling-Retaliations of *Providence*, remember the following Instructions.

1. The

1. The leſs ground there is of dejection under ſtraits, by how much the more parties have been helpful to others under their ſtraits. *For God* (ſaith the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*) *is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed towards his name, in that ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do miniſter*, Heb. 6 10. *Job* was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father to the poor, the bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon him, *Job* 29. He hath experience after his ſharp Winter-ſeaſon, of Retaliating-Smiling-*Providence*; his Brethren, Siſters, and all that had been of his acquaintance, afford him heart and hand for his ſupportation and conſolation, *Job* 42. 11.

2. Take notice, how God hath been a gracious Pay-Maſter to you one way or other. The debts of kindneſs are paid off in money, or as good, if not better, than money. Old *Barzillai*, who had a loyal heart and a bountiful hand towards *David* in his flight from *Abſolom*, experienceth the King's favour to him and his: ſee 2 *Sam.* 17. 27, 28, 29. 2 *Sam.* 19. 38, 39.

3. Take encouragement then, to put on bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, as is ſaid *Col.* 3. 2. How many are there, of whom it may be ſaid, They have guts, but no bowels of compaſſion towards others afflicted! Forget not, more eſpecially, to have a reſpect to God's ſervants, whether ſtrictly, or generally ſo termed.

termed. It's an encouraging meditation we have in 2 *Kings* 8. 4, 5, 6. compared with 2 *Kings* 4. 8, 9, 10. the good Prophet, though dead, is yet a virtual spokesman to the King for that woman who had been hospitable in entertaining him at her house: her sparing the Prophet a little room, is richly requited with the King's restoring her the whole House, Lands, Profits or Issues thence arising from the time of her absence, to the time of her address made to the King there. Remember then that of Christ, *Mat.* 10. 41. *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophets reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.*

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XXXVII.

The Circumstances of Time and Place afford substantial Documents, or weighty Instructions to the Observers of Providence.

CHAP. I.

TIME and Place put weight into the Scale of Moral Actions: Virtue and Vice have an aggravation, according to the consideration of Time and Place. And as Time and Place have their consideration in Moralities, so in the Displays of *Providence*, God, who is the Author of Time and Place, doth wisely govern Matters with respect to Time and Place.

To begin then with the first of these; and so it will not be lost time to take a view of *Providence* about the timing of things. And here three Positions offer themselves.

First, It belongs to God, as his Prerogative-Royal, to Time Matters. In Isa. 60.22. *I the Lord will hasten it in his time.* And in *Acts* 1.7. *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The Lord, who is wise, doth wisely Time matters. This appears, if it be considered,

1. That the Scripture not only speaks of Time, but of a fulness of Time, which notes the mature, exact, or fit bringing-forth of matters on the stage of this world. Our Saviour Christ came in the fulness of time, as we read it asserted once and again, *Gal.* 4. 4. and *Eph.* 1. 10.

2. There is no solid reason for man to object against the Lord's Timing of Matters. For, (1.) Hereby folly is exalted, *Eccles.* 7. 10. *Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.* (2.) Men have smarted for their folly, when they will have other times, or things timed according to their discontented humours. The *Israelites* must have flesh-days; they shall have them; and enough of them, see *Numb.* 11. 32, 33.

3. As there is reason, so it's man's wisdom to be calm, and not foolishly stumbled at this or that about Times. There are two ways how times may be said to be evil:

1. In regard of the evils of Sin.
2. In regard of the evils of Smart.

As for evil times in regard of Sin, though it be our duty to groan, yet not to grudg or mutter against the Lord because such times are. Times are bad; and by an undue discontent they are not made better, but worse. There is a wise and good *Providence* of

of God, when Times are thus bad. Divers things might here be insisted on; I shall only point at one, and that is, The truth of his Word which hath foretold of such times; and this, if considered, may not only break the force of temptation, as if God did not govern the world at such times; but likewise confirm us in the faith. In the time of Pope *Clement* the fifth, *Frederick* King of *Sicily* was so far offended at the ill government of the Church, that he called into question the truth of the Christian Religion, till he was better resolved and setled in the point by *Arnoldus de Villa nova*, who evidenced to him, That it was long since foretold of such days of defection and abomination, when iniquity should abound, 1 *Tim.*4.1. 2 *Tim.*3.1,2,*&c.*

In the next place, as for bad times in regard of the evil of Smart, there is less ground for disquiet, if sin be considered of as ordinarily preceding such evils of Smart. The Scarlet and Crimson Sins make way for Garments rolled and dyed in blood. It was a pious confession in Ezra 9. 23. *Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us: for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.* And where the days are black and bloody ones, notwithstanding they who are killed, burned, massacred, keep their garments undefiled, being persecuted for righteousnes sake; yet God is good in such bad times as these. Much might be said in way of an apology for *Providence* here. It may suffice, That they who do suffer, are sweetly satisfied as to what is their lot and portion

portion in this kind. In *Rev.* 13. 7. *It was given to him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them.* Mr. *Mede* interprets this place as having reference to the times of the *Albigenses*, and quotes an observable reply of some of them to the Argument drawn from the success of the Popish party against them, namely, That they were the conquered people of Christ. The Scripture had foretold of what should be, and so what might make against them, makes for them. They were overcom'd, and yet did overcome by their faith and patience. The Wild-Boar of the Forest did chase them to their Father's House. A time comes when Christ plays the mighty Huntsman, and so slays the slayer, to the glory of His Vindictive Justice.

Nam cum Episcopus Tolosanus stragi intercedens, eos, qui adhuc residui intentoriis forte manserant, missos quodam religioso, ut tanto quasi Dei irati, & contra eos pronunciantis flagello convicti, jam tandem feritate depositâ ad fidem quam vocant Catholicam converterentur. illi verò se populum Christi victum retorquentes hoc quasi clypeo, tentationis impetum frustrati sunt atq; ad unum omnes à recurrentium Militum manu interfecti, fortiter occubuerunt.

Thirdly, There is a glorious display of *Providence* in timing both Mercies and Judgments. Mercies are timed, and so timed, as that they are oftentimes inhanced from the season for them. God did remember *Joseph* in the Butler's forgetting of him; for *Joseph* is reserved till he be more fitted for release, and till *Pharaoh* be at a loss about his dreams, for the Magicians could not interpret them unto *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* 41. 8. The like may be observed in *Daniel's*

Daniel's case; between whose intended slaughter and advancement there was but a little time, *Dan.* 2. 13. *with following verses.* Moreover, the time of Mercy doth sometimes lead to, or point at, some duty, which the Lord graciously recompenceth at such time. The day of setting upon Temple-work, is a day of God's blessing them from thence, *Hag.* 2. 18, 19. It is observed, how the *English* had victory given unto them on that very day and hour Images were burnt at *London.* And as for Judgments, the Lord times them. The *Assyrians* goes not against an hypocritical Nation, till God sends them, *Isa* 10. 6. God knows how to make a Calamity a double one, in regard of the timing of it. That passage in *Mat.* 24. 20. doth plainly attest so much. Moreover, the day of Calamity may point out at sin committed on the day that Calamity is inflicted. *While the word* (a proud one) *was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven,* &c. Dan. 4. 31. Time is sometimes a Glass to behold the sin committed then, or before, at such a time, which hath its recourse when the Judgment is inflicted. The day, week, month of Smart, may point to the day, week, month, of Sin, before.

For Acts and Mon. in the History of *Edward* the sixth.

The Second Branch of the Observation refers to Places. And here three Propositions likewise offer themselves to consideration.

First, Some Places are Monuments of *Providence* in regard of what falls out there. *Surely* (saith

(saith *Jacob*) *the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not: he set up a pillar, and called the name of the place Bethel*, Gen. 28. 16, 17, 18, 19. See moreover, for this purpose, *Numb.* 21. 3. 1 *Sam.* 7. 12. 1 *Chron.* 22. 1.

Secondly, There is much of *Providence* in going to Places, and in absence of parties from Places. A *Levite* lodgeth at *Gibeah*, Judg. 19. 14. and what falls out there, is the desolation of *Benjamin*; no less than the lives of Twenty and five thousand *Benjamites* pay the shot, or discharge that *Levite's* Quarters, *Judg.* 20. 46. In 2 *Sam.* 20. 1. there happened to be there a man of *Belial*, whose name was *Sheba* the son of *Bichri*, a *Benjamite*; and he blew the Trumpet of Sedition. *Nathan*, *Sadoek*, *Benaiah*, *Solomon*, are not at that Seditious Feast of *Adonijah*: *Abiathar*, *Joab*, are; and they had better fasted, than thus feasted, as the sequel of the story doth declare, 1 *King.* 1. There was much of *Providence* in *Saul's* coming to *Jabesh-Gilead* for their help, 1. *Sam.* 11. 11.

Thirdly, Both Mercy and Wrath may be read in legible Characters on Places, and at Places. The *Providence* of God is seen in way of Mercy, as it respects the place it self, in blessing of it, as he did the land of *Canaan* to the *Israelites*. And the same *Providence* is displayed in way of mercy at places, and that in doing good to the souls of men, and to the outward man too. *Many of the Jews which came to Mary* (at *Bethany*) *and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him*, John 11. 45. The blind man is in the way nigh *Jericho*, and Christ there passeth by,

by, and healeth him, *Luke* 18. 35. And as Mercy is thus displayed, so Wrath likewise. *The Lord turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry grounds, a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*, Psal. 107. 33, 34. The Brethren of *Ahaziah* are on their progress to visit *Ahab*'s children at *Samaria*; they are met with by *Jehu*, and slain at the pit of the shearing-house, even two and forty men, 2 *Kings* 10. 13, 14. King *Joram* is providentially drawn forth from *Jezreel*, and met *Jehu* in the portion of *Naboth* the *Jezreelite*, 2 *Kings* 9. 21. he is slain by *Jehu*, and his body is thrown on that very plat, according to the word of the Lord, as *Jehu* makes the observation, *v.* 25, 26, of the same chapter.

CHAP. II.

1. FROM the Lord's timing of matters, learn, (1.) What ground there is for wicked ones to consider of their ways. God not only times Punishment, but so times it, as that it may become double punishment. God hath turned the Glass of his Long-suffering in Heaven; how many sands are run out, and how many are to run out, they know not: this let them know, That God will come in way of punishing, if they come not in way of repenting; he will come even to a sand. When the iniquity of the *Amorites* is full, vengeance

steps in, *Gen.* 15. 18. There is a *MENE, God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it*, for a *Belshazzar*, Dan. 5. 25. And as the Lord times Wrath, so there is a stinging timing of it: Wicked ones have a spring-tide of Wrath, when they expected it not: so it was foretold of *Babylon*, Isa. 47. 9. *But these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection*, &c. And in v. 11. *Therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt not know from whence it ariseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.* (2.) What ground is there for godly ones to wait on God in his *Providence* for mercy: God hath his timing of mercy, and so timing of it, as may the more commend the mercy. There is a blessed season to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones, *Isa.* 57. 15. *John*'s Disciples came to Christ in a seasonable time, to be strengthned in the faith of the *Messiah*; *Go and shew John* (saith Christ) *those things which ye do hear and see*, Mat. 11. 5, 6. Christ knew when to fill *Peter*'s net with fish, after they had toiled all night, and caught nothing, *Luke* 5. 5, 6. *Isaac* hath a comfortable yoke-fellow after his Mother's death, and was comforted, *Gen.* 24. 67.

2. From God's *Providence* in reference to Places: (1.) Let men be afraid of sinning against God in places: In the very places God can alarum them, and punish them. The King with

with his Carowsing-Courtiers, are appaled with the fingers of a man's hand, which came forth and wrote upon the plaister of the wall; yea, it is said, *In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain*, Dan. 5. 5, 6, 7, 30. (2.) Observe Place-Providences. Let afflictions and mercies in respective places, have one place more, and that is the heart, to think upon them, and improve them. *Jacob* was bid to mind *Bethel*, a mercy of old there, and a duty incumbent on him upon the account of mercy vouchsafed, *Gen.* 35. 1. The same *Jacob* takes notice of his Wife *Rachel*'s death, where she died, and tells *Joseph* of it, *Gen.* 48. 7. *Paul* forgat not his *Asian*-trouble, and mercy withal, which whether it were a violent fit of sickness, or hot persecution, and deliverance from the one or other, it matters not; he observed the *Providence* of God there, and improveth it, 2 *Cor.* 1. 8, 9, 10, 11. the same Apostle hath brief observations on what happened in divers places of his Apostolical-pilgrimage, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23, *to the end.*

OBSERVATION XXXVIII.

Man's Extremity is Heaven's Time and Opportunity for Help.

CHAP. I.

IT hath been discussed, How God's *Providence* is seen in Timing of matters: Now, amongst other things, not only the timing, but so timing in regard of opportune help, is to be touched. And because the *Providence* of God is wonderfully displayed on this wise, so that His actings of this nature are moulded into a religious Aphorism or Sentence, as *Gen.* 22. 14. *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen:* It will be very pertinent to insist on the seasonable display of *Providence* under Distress or Difficulty. That passage in the Scripture quoted, may be stiled, *A Providential Proverb*; for so the words [*as it is said unto this day*] in the Text there, do imply. The occasion of this Sacred form of speech, was the Lord's stepping in for *Abraham*'s help. There are three things to be noted:

1. *That distress befalleth a person or a people.* For so it was here with *Abraham*; *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.* 2. That

3. *That a diſtreſs proves an abiding-one ſo long as God pleaſeth.* *Abraham* travelleth on the firſt and ſecond day, no releaſe: and on the third day he lifts up his eyes, and ſaw the place afar off, *v.*4. The ſight of the place muſt needs affect his heart, this *Golgotha*, or place of Skull, might make him hang down his head with ſorrow: his head might well have aked on both ſides, had he not had a hand of faith to hold it; and this he had, as the Author to the *Hebrews* doth affirm, ch. 11. 17, 18, 19.

4. *That Providence doth opportunely appear for diſtreſſed ones, by way of releaſe from troubles.* *Abraham* muſt have the ſacrificing-knife in his hand to ſlay his ſon, ere the Angel of the Lord call unto him, ſaying, *Lay not thy hand on the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him*, &c. What here was *Abraham*'s caſe, is by way of proportion the caſes of others, who have their extremities, as God hath his opportunities for help: and that *Providence* hath thus its opportunities for help, will appear, if we conſider,

1. Promiſes, which imply ſo much.
2. Divine Performances or Exemplifications of this Truth.
3. The variety of Ends which God hath in matters of this nature.

Firſt, Promiſes, formally and properly ſo termed, we have in Scripture. *Gen.* 15. 13. compared with *Exod.* 3. 7. and *Exod.* 5. 7, 8. doth give us to underſtand, That God's Promiſe of bringing the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, was not the

further off from fulfilling, though the *Israelites* had been long under the *Egyptian* yoke, and their yoke was made heavier a little before the Lord brake it to pieces. The Promise stood still irrevocable, and in its full strength, when the *Israelites* were weakest: help was then nearest, when they might think it furthest off, in regard of the bricks doubled. In *Deut.* 32. 36. *For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* This is extensive to persons or people under heavy pressures and difficulties: the more persons evidence themselves to be God's people, the more they may find in the accomplishment of what is here promised, *Psal.* 9. 18. *For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever,* Psal. 12. 5. *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.* Psal. 72. 12, 13. *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy: he shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight.* Zech. 14. 7. *It shall come to pass, that at evening it shall be light:* that is, Mercy then shall break forth, when little expected: they shall have a Morning of Mercy, in their Evening of Difficulties. That of *Paul* in 2 *Cor.* 1. 9, 10. may be look't on as at least a virtual promise. *We had* (saith he) *the sentence of death in our selves, that*

we

we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver.

1.2. Come we next to Performances, or the Experiences of persons. God remembred *Noah* after he had been shut up in the Ark, *Gen.*8.1. *Lot* is rescued timely by *Abraham*, Gen.14.13. *Sarah* was taken into house, *Gen.*20.2. and it is said, God came to *Abimelech* in a dream, and said, *Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken: for she is a man's wife*, ver. 3. *Providence* was seasonable for the preservation of *Sarah*'s chastity. The *Israelites* are at the Red-sea, and the *Egyptians* at their backs, they could neither drink up the one, nor eat up the other, no ordinary way of escape: and yet then the Lord opens a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, *Exod.* 14.21,22. *Israel* was sore distressed, *Judg.*10.9. then the Spirit of the Lord came upon *Jephthah*, and he becomes their deliverer, *Judg.* 11. 29. So it is said, *The Lord saw the affliction of Israel that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any help for Israel; and the Lord said not, that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash*, 2 King. 14.26,27. *Joseph* was in the briars, a knotty case offers it self; and while he thought on these things, the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, *Mat.*1.20. The Disciples of Christ were in the Ship, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the Ship was covered

with the waves; they come to Christ, awake him, saying, *Lord save us, we perish:* then he arose (after this storm, and check given to them for the tempest of unbelief in their souls) and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm, *Mat.* 8.24,25,26. Again, when the disciples cry'd out for fear, straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, *Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid*, Mat. 14. 26,27. Christ appears timely to the *Emmaus*-disciples under their heaviness, *Luke* 24.17. And as the *Jews* went about to kill *Paul*, tidings came to the chief Captain of the Band, That all *Jerusalem* was in an uproar; who immediately took Soldiers and Centurions, and so rescued *Paul*, Acts 21. 31,32. *Paul*'s Sister's son heard of the *Jews* lying in wait to kill *Paul*, and so there was a seasonable prevention of the murderous design, *Acts* 23.16. *Epaphroditus* was sick unto the death, but the Lord had mercy on him, *Phil.* 2. 27. Thus all these are instances of seasonable help from Heaven under extremities.

Thirdly, The variety of Ends which the Lord hath in the swelling of a distress, ere he apply the remedy; is the next thing to be insisted on. These Ends subordinate to his will and pleasure, may be reckoned up, as follows:

1. To chasten for sin. Great sins call for grievous distresses. As men were swift in transgressing; so *Providence* may justly be slow in delivering. God will let men see by the evils of smart, how provoking their evils of sin have been. *Joseph*'s brethren envy him,

Gen.

Gen. 37. 11. had reſolution to ſlay him, *v.* 20. commit Plagiary in ſelling their brother to the *Iſmaelites*, for he was not theirs to ſell, *v.* 28. with 40. *Gen.* 15. They are after diſtreſſed in *Egypt*, and Conſcience then rings them a peal, being ſo diſtreſſed, *Gen.* 42. 21. Their diſtreſs riſeth higher and higher, for behold their money is in their Sacks-mouth, and hereupon their hearts failed them, and they were afraid, ſaying one to another, *What is this that God hath done unto us?* Gen. 42. 28. Neither is this all, but a hard task they have to get *Benjamin* from their Father, in order to the purgation of themſelves from being Spies; and no going again to *Egypt* without him; and if they go not, they muſt go down to their graves, for the famine was ſore in the Land, *Gen.* 43. 1, 2. At length *Jacob* is prevailed with to let *Benjamin* go; and then their diſtreſs evades a ſuperlative one; the killing-part of the Tragedy is acted; the Cup is found in *Benjamin*'s Sack; and according to their verdict *Benjamin* was to dye, and they to be bond-men, *Gen.* 44. 9. Now is the ſpring-tide of diſtreſs, which overflows all the banks, as appears from the pathetical Oration of *Judah*, who vents his ſorrows, ſaying, *What ſhall we ſay unto my Lord? What ſhall we ſpeak? or how ſhall we clear our ſelves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy ſervants: we are my Lord's bond-men, and he alſo with whom the cup is found*, Gen. 44. 16. Now when their diſtreſs mounts to the clouds, help comes down from the Heavens; *I am Joſeph* (ſaith *Joſeph*); *I am Joſeph*

your

your brothers, whom ye sold into Egypt, Gen. 45. 3, 4. To this instance add another: God did threaten the people by *Isaiah* with the *Assyrian* flood, which was to overflow, go over, and reach even to the neck, *Isa.* 8. 6. Accordingly it was accomplished; for the *Assyrians*, like a deluge of water, did overflow even to the head-City *Jerusalem*, which, like a man, stood up to the neck in these waters, the body of the nation being cover'd with them; and then the Lord, who sets bounds, causeth the waters to return, as we have the story in *Isa.* 37. 36, 37, 38. the [*then there*] in the Text, hath reference to the *Jews* doleful case when within the City; God hath then his Angel for their deliverance, when the *Assyrian* in his pride is highest, and resolved in an utter riddance of the Lord's people.

2. To dis-engage or take off the heart from creature-dependency, and to call forth the faith for exercise on God. The greater the distresses are, and no way visible for help, the more is there a place for faith on God. *Providence* narrows or straitens the conditions of parties, that so there may be more room or enlargement for the exercise of faith. All Creature-twigs being lopt off, there is nothing left but to hang the more on the Creator. Faith will find somewhat to take hold on, when Sense seeth nothing. *I looked* (saith the *Psalmist*) *on my right hand, and behold, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me: no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion*

in

in the land of the living, Psal. 142. 4, 5. the like was *Paul*'s case, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9.

3. To let men know, That the Lord he is God, and can help, notwithstanding there is a visible face of things to the contrary. The *Israelites* shall out of *Egypt*, and over the Red-sea, let Task-masters, Horses, Chariots, the mighty Waters, say the contrary. *Now I know* (saith *Jethro*) *that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them*, Exod. 18. 11. That is notable in *Hezekiah*'s days, when the case was sad at *Jerusalem*, as that in Isa. 37. 3. *This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.* And yet though thus saith *Hezekiah*, yet thus saith the Lord concerning the King of *Assyria*, *He shall not come into this City, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it: by the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this City, saith the Lord*, v. 33, 34. God is the great Arbiter or Controller of things. He will be known amongst the Mighties of the World; and one season when he thus will be known, is when distressed ones know not what to do, but to sigh and pray to him, who is great, and greatly to be praised, and feared above all gods, *Psal.* 96. 4.

4. To encourage praying-work. The Church of God in *Esther*'s time, had, as it were, her neck on the block; the lifted-up hands hold up the lifted-up Ax from falling down, *Esth.* 4. 16.

4. 16. Prayer was made without ceasing for *Peter*, *Acts* 12. 5. the Lord sends an Angel, who procures a timely Gaol-delivery, *v.* 7, 8, 9, 10. As God doth call forth prayer in such extremities (for our extremities call upon us to call upon God): so his goodness is seen in the answer made unto prayer; which may further be a Load-stone to this duty under the like extremities. It is said in *Psal.* 102. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.* O how oft have praying-ones had experience of God's regarding them, when in respect of their extremities, sense and reason might be ready to prompt, as if the Lord had utterly rejected them! I remember here a memorable story: There happened to be a Famine in a Ship, insomuch that the question was started about drawing lots who should be eaten; one of note in the Ship, and a pious man withal, desired the rest, That they might first seek to God by prayer, before they resolved to enact so inhuman a Butchery: and accordingly he made a prayer to God; and whilst he was praying, a Fish of some bigness was cast out of the sea upon the place where he was praying: this Fish they divided; and though it were but a short Commons for hungry ones, yet it put a stop to a Flesh-dinner for that time: but however, the belly hath no ears, hunger comes on, and the old question about a bloody Flesh-meal is started: The man who was their mouth to God in prayer, wills them, They might look up again to God, having had experience of his

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gracious *Providence* in the Fifth: accordingly to prayer they go; and whilst at prayer, a Fowl of considerable bigness flies a-thwart the Ship-tackling, and is entangled, which they had, and accordingly divided; and before any further controversie did arise, a Ship bears up towards them; and their distressed case being communicated, provision they had out of the Ship, and that notwithstanding the Captain of the Ship had a particular grudg against the man of note in the other Ship, and was resolved at first to play the *Esau* with this *Jacob*; but yet did him no harm.

5. To render His Wisdom and Power conspicuous, and that not only to persons the immediate subjects of such relief, but likewise to others in after-generations. So for the Wisdom and Power of God; there was more than a few drops of these at the Red-sea: how often is that deliverance taken notice of, and celebrated in the Sacred Scriptures! The like may be said of the distress of the Lord's people in *Esther*'s days: What a glorious display was there of Power and Wisdom in that astonishing deliverance! In *Psal.* 102. we understand of the low and distressed case of persons there: for the title of the *Psalm* is, *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and poureth out his complaint before the Lord:* And passages in the *Psalm* do imply distresses: We have there doleful complaints, and a tragical description of distress; express mention made of *Zion's* stones, and dust: and now, notwithstanding the sore distress of the Lord's people, the

the Lord is not wanting; for it is said, ver. 16. *When the Lord will build up Zion, he will appear in his glory*; that is, he will exalt the glory of his Attributes, particularly, of his Power and Wisdom; he hath both Power and Skill to gather the stones and dust, and make a glorious building, glorious to the eyes of those who shall take a view of all; *for this shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord*, ver. 18.

6. To check the pride, insultation, and malicious resolutions of wicked ones. *Come*, say the *Babylonians*, *sing us one of the songs of Zion*, Psal. 137. 3. God can in time let the *Babylonian* know, there are those whom he can make use of to make the *Babylonians* howl, who now call for singing one of the Lord's songs. How were *Pharaoh*, *Haman*, *Senacherib*, check'd at a nick of time! And not only in former times hath *Providence* been seen in giving a check, but also in later days. There is a very remarkable story of *Magdeburge*, the Citizens whereof in *Charles* the Fifth's time, Emperor of *Germany*, stood out heroically, notwithstanding the Emperor had born down with force the Protestants in all *Germany*; only *Magdeburge* is like the Pelican in the wilderness, and the Owl of the desart, and the Sparrow alone on the house-top: and though so, yet how in the nick of time was Prince *Maurice*, who besieged them, wheeled about to be their friend, and so makes Articles of Peace with them, and with his Army falls in upon the Emperor, who flies

before

before him, and after forſakes the Imperial Crown, betaking himſelf to a retired life, and ſo the Proteſtant Intereſt which was ſore depreſſed, hath its reſurrection to the baffling of Popiſh expectations. Hither, or under this head, may be referred that of the witneſſes in *Rev.* 11. I wave debates as to parties ſlain, and the time when, whether at ſeveral times in ſeveral generations: That which makes for the matter in hand, is the Lord's raiſing them, notwithſtanding their being ſlain, and that to the fame and terror of their adverſaries: for ſo ver. 11. *after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entred into them, and they ſtood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them.* That in *Mic.* 7. 10. may here be accommodated as a good Comment on this place, and pertinent to the matter in hand: *Then ſhe that is mine enemy ſhall ſee it, and ſhame ſhall cover her which ſaid unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Behold, mine eyes ſhall behold her; now ſhall ſhe be trodden down as the mire of the ſtreets.*

Laſtly, To mention no more: The Lord doth ſtep in, in the depth of miſery, to endear himſelf unto perſons holpen; and to engage their hearts the more unto him, who doth exalt his mercy at ſuch a ſeaſon. So in *Exod.* 15. 13. *Thou in mercy haſt led forth the people which thou haſt redeemed.* And Pſal. 34 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles.* And in Pſal 116. *The ſorrows of death compaſſed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and ſorrow: then I*

called

called upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul; gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE folly and vanity, (1.) In regard of impatiency under evils. (2.) In regard of excursions, or steppings aside from duty to the use of means, for which men have no warrant. There is folly both these ways. The *Israelites* fell foul on *Moses* and *Aaron*, because the door for egress out of *Egypt*, was not opened at first knocking. What though a double Lock seem to be set on the door of the great working-house; yet no reason to quarrel; the Lord knows how and when to open the door, or break it open, as he did in his own time, to his own glory. It was *Saul*'s fault, that he would sacrifice before *Samuel* came, and he smarted for it, 1 *Sam.* 13. 8, 9. Let men learn from *Saul*'s folly to be wise; let them not force themselves to this or that as a means for help under straits, which God approveth not; remembring withal, how a *Samuel* may be a coming with help from the Lord, when they are going from the Lord.

2. Watch against anxious and perplexing disquiet of heart under straits. There is no ground for a Christian to distract his heart in the want of visible means, or to distrust his God

God in the midst of visible dangers. Remember who bids, to take no thought; that is, not to be anxious, distrustful, disquieted under difficulties; and withal, what he saith further, *it shall be given you in that same hour*, Matth. 10. 19. Not only Years, Months, Weeks, Days, but even Hours, for Heaven's help, are contained in the Calendar of *Providence*.

3. Treasure up the Experiences of Divine Help under Needs and Difficulties. *David* had a signal appearance of *Providence* for his relief, when *Saul* is on the one side of the Mountain, and *David* on the other: and this *David* forgets not; for it is vertually contained in his deliverance out of the hand of *Saul*; which deliverance he celebrates, 2 *Sam.* 22. If thou hast a Mountain-Providence, with *David*, forget not the God of thy Mountain-Dispensation. Remember two things: (1.) The more eminent thy Mercy, the more reason to value it. The depth of a Misery may well call for the admiration of the height of Divine Mercy: see an instance *Psal.* 116. 3,4,5,6,7,8,9. (2.) The laying up of such an Experience, will be of great use for after-times. Thou mayest be in regard of temporals or spirituals, as is said *Acts* 27. 20. Now when neither Sun nor Starrs in many days appeared, &c. To look back on *Providence* in a sad Voyage before, will be of use, when the case is sad for the present. The Meditation on former Experience, may be a prop to the tottering-house of a weak faith: see *Psal.* 77. 5, 10, 11.

OBSERVATION XXXIX.

At or nigh the same time there is a like face of Providence *shewing it self in Places.*

CHAP. I.

HOW the *Providence* of God is displayed both as to Time and Place, and particularly as to the so timing of Help under Extremities, hath been insisted on. The present Observation, which hath some reference both to Time and Place, is now to be spoken unto: And here, in the first place, shall be shewed, how the like work of *Providence* in Places may be considered: and that three ways:

1. In regard of Premonition or discovery of what is to take place in the world. Thus when the Lord would take up *Elijah* into Heaven, not only *Elisha* hath a discovery of what the Lord is about to do; but the sons of the Prophets that were at *Bethel*, 2 King. 2. 3. and not only they, but also the sons of the Prophets that were at *Jericho*, v. 5. *of the same chapter*. And so the hand of the Lord was upon *Ezekiel* in the evening, afore one that had escaped from *Jerusalem* brought tydings that the City was smitten, *Ezek.* 33. 21, 22. *Peter*

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at *Joppa* hath a Vision which holds correspondence with a work of *Providence* relating to the Gentiles, particularly, *Cornelius* at *Cesarea*, who was bid to send to *Joppa*, and call for one *Simon*, whose sir-name was *Peter*, *Acts* 10.

2. In regard of antecedent preparation, disposition, or qualification, for what is to come forth on the stage of the World. The *Jews* were awakened to prayer-work, when the Seventy years were, or nigh, accomplished at *Babylon*, Jer. 29. 12. *Moses* is to go on the Lord's Embassie to *Egypt*; he wants a Spokesman, and God brings one to his hand, *Exod.* 4. 10, 14, 15, 16, 27. When Christ was brought to the Temple, what a wonderful *Providence* was there, in *Simeon*'s coming thither at that time when *Mary* came thither? and so in *Anna*'s coming in that instant, as it is said *Luke* 2. 27, 38? Both *Simeon* and *Anna* were Witnesses to and for Christ; they came seasonably to the Temple, there to testifie of Him who was Lord of the Temple. *Ver.* 29, to the 39.

3. In regard of the work it self, which is the same, or a like, for kind. And here we may consider it,

1. As a Work of Mercy in it self considered.
2. As a Work of Wrath.

1. As a Work of Mercy. The Gospel of Grace was communicated to the Gentiles, and the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on

them, *Acts* 10. 45. They at *Corinth* were enriched in utterance and knowledg, as well as they at *Jerusalem*, 1 Cor. 1. 5. In the times of the Reformation of Religion, *Zuinglius* at the same time opposeth the Pope's Indulgences amongst the *Helvetians*, at which *Luther* did amongst the *Germans*: how did then Cities, Towns, Parishes, fall off from Popery, as leaves from the Trees in *Autumn*? And it is observed how Learning at one and the same time began to hold up its head, and that in divers places, as *Sculletus* hath it. And as for Learning, so for Peace and Tranquility, the *Providence* of God may be noted. It is said *Acts* 9. 31. *Then had the Churches rest thorowout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria.* A time there is, when Countreys have their worldly Jubilee. All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest, is the report made, *Zech.* 1. 11.

Docebat hoc tempore in Tiguri Helvetiis Ulricus *Zuinglius* &c. *Sleid.* com. lib. 1 sub finem---

Et quod miteris uno & eodem tempore in diversis mundi regionibus intermortua pridem studia in Vitam revocabant *Leo* 10. Pontifex Romæ apud Hispanos Cardinalis *Xelatenus*: apud Anglos, Rex *Henricus*, ejus nominis octavus: apud Belgas Rex Catholicus, *Carolus*: apud Gallos, Rex *Franciscus*. Annal. dec. 1. p. 3.

2. As a Work of Wrath, or Severity; and so there may be noted how a like face of things there is in places at or nigh the same time. A time there was, when the Lord suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways, *Acts* 14. 16. A time there was, when ignorance, and lack of learning did prevail to an astonishment at the stupidity of those in that time. And as Ignorance had its time; so Sophistry and unprofitable Subtilty, instead of sound

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and savoury Divinity, did abound in the Thirteenth Century. It is observed, how both *Mahumetism* and *Papism* did put forth themselves at or about the same time. And as for external calamities, they have been timed in divers places. The Wine-cup of the Lord's fury hath passed from Nation to Nation, as *Jer.* 25. 15. and not only so in the times before Christ, but after; that *Rev.* 6. tells a sad story of Red, Black, and Pale Horses. What befel the *Roman* Empire in regard of Warrs, Famine, and Ten years Pestilence which was universal, is a Providential Comment on the Text.

Mira ratio, & digna res observatione est, quod eodem fere tempore cæperunt in altum assurgere atq; emergere Papa Romanus, supra reliquas Christi Ecclesias sese extollens, & Mahumetana religio, Turcicæq; gentis Imperium. *Magd.* Cent. 12. Epistolâ nuncupat. Sub dicto igitur *Phoca* tyranno ac Cæsaricida (quod in Papis mysterio non vacat) Papismus & Mahumetismus simul sunt exorti, qui multis in regionibus doctrinam de Dei filio corruperunt, obscurarunt, labefactarunt. *Balem* centr. 1. p. 68.

CHAP. II.

1. BEHOLD how the Lord is God in one place as well as another. He is not confined in regard of operations to this or that Country or Kingdom. It's said in *Ezek.* 1. 9. Every one (of the living creatures) had four faces, and every one had four wings; their four faces behold the four quarters of the world, and their four wings may note their being accomplish't for action in divers places; and take their flight at one and the same time to bring about what the Lord commissions to be done.

No reason for persons to be despondent who want Mercies of which others in other places are participant of. The same Sun of like favours may shine upon their habitation. Were persons more prayerful, they might have experience of God's being merciful. Beware we then of a discontented eye at others Mercies, and wisely improve our own wants. There is enough in the rich Exchequer of *Providence* to supply all wants, whether for soul or for the outward man. *Providence* knows how to comfort the waste places, to make the Wilderness like *Eden*, and the Desart like the Garden of the Lord, *Isa.* 51. 3.

3. Great ground is there for men to shake off wretched security when *Providence* frowns on

on others in far or near places. Who knows where the train of Gun-powder, being once set a fire, may creep, and do its deadly execution? The end of one place's Calamity, may be the beginning of another's. The bitter Cup, of which some have drank, may fall thorow unto others, notwithstanding security and presumption, as the daughter of *Edom* is informed, *Lam.* 4. 22.

OBSERVATION XL.

There is a dashing-work of Providence *in regard of various matters, which in way of probability offer themselves to the eye of Sense and Reason.*

CHAP. I.

THAT the fair and promising-face of things is sometimes veiled, yea, hush't into a perpetual darkness, never to see light in this world; appears,

1. From God's otherwise informing the judgments of persons about matters. *Abraham* was without issue, heir-male and female. He thought *Eliezer* must be the man who must heir it. But what saith God? *This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir*, Gen.15.4. *Samuel* is sent to anoint one of the sons of *Jesse*; *and it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him: but the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*, 1 Sam.16.6,7.

2. From

2. From the confessions and acknowledgments of parties. Thus in that acknowledgment of the Church, *Isa.* 64. 3. *When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for*, &c. In *Jer.* 17. 12. *My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart*, saith that man of God under his black cloud; and in *v.* 15. *Where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?* and yet he and others lived to see a confutation of his black conclusions drawn from the present face of things; for the Lord turned the captivity of *Job*, *chap.* 42. *v.* 10.

3. From assertions in Scripture which imply so much. *I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battel to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all*, Eccles. 9. 11. And in *Eccles.* 10. 7. *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon earth.*

4. From exemplifications, and that in temporals and spirituals. Who would have thought that *Joseph*, who was such a friend to the state of *Egypt*, should be forgotten as he was? *Exod.* 1. 8. Who would have imagined in the first days of so wise a Prince as *Solomon*, that a crack't Axel-tree of Government should be transmitted to his son *Rehoboam*? 1 *King.* 11. 43. with 1 *King.* 12. 10. Little did *Adam* and *Eve* think, that so promising a son as *Abel* should have the candle of his life puft out by the blood-warm breath of a *Cain* their own son. How did *Hezekiah* argue otherwise from

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his distemper, than it fell out eventually, *Isa.* 38. 10, 11, 12. *Paul* and *Silas* alter their purposed course in preaching the Gospel in *Bythinia*, *Acts* 16. 17. The wise and prudent of the world are not wise and prudent for a blessed eternity, *Mat.* 11. 25. Christ came to his own, and they received him not, *John* 1. 11. they who are seeming-friends of the Church, become real-enemies, *Acts* 20. 30.

CHAP. II.

1. THERE is no ground then for peremptory conclusions from a probable face of things. How quickly may the Snow-ball melt? the great bubble vanish? the storm turn into a calm, and the calm into a storm? The Disciples were much taken with the Buildings of the Temple; and what saith Christ? *See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be* thrown down, Mat. 24. 1, 2. In *Isa.* 7. 2. it was told the house of *David*, saying, *Syria is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* But yet all this promising, or rather threatning, confederacy, ends in smoak; there is a dashing-work of *Providence*, as is fully there described from *v.* 3, to 10.

2. Beware of rashness in acting upon a face of things which presents it self. Many

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ply deer in their Credits, Purses, and Consciences, by taking an alarum, when they might have slept quiet in the bed of an holy repose and confidence in God. *Thus saith the Lord God, the holy one of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not: but ye said no, for we will flie upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and we will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift,* Isa. 30. 15, 16.

3. Quarrel not with the Lord's Government of the World, because he doth that make and unmake, build, as it were, an house, and by and by pulls it down. If the bringing forth of some things is like the shooting up of *Mushrooms*, quickly up, and quickly down; yet sure the *Providence* of God reacheth to these *Mushrooms*, as well as to the Cedars of *Lebanon*. There is no reason for foolish man to find fault with an All-wise God, though he presents that on the stage of the World which hath not its imagined rise. God hath wise Ends subordinate to his Glory in Dispensations of this nature.

4. To let men know how the Lord he is God; for things go according to his thoughts, and not as men surmise and imagine, according to the outward appearance of things. *O Lord* (saith the *Psalmist*) *how great are thy works, and thy thoughts very deep? A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool under-*

understand this, when the wicked spring as grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever, Psal. 92. 5, 6, 7. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,* Isa. 55. 8, 9.

2. To display his Sovereignty more or less as he pleaseth. What if the Lord suffer vessels made? shake off the fruit ere it be ripe, as in abortive infants? Is he therefore to be quarrelled with? May not he break the vessels, as Jer. 18. 6? *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord?* and say to the Fig-tree, *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever,* Mat. 21. 19.

3. To bring to light the sins of men by a probable face of things. *Shimei* discovers his rooted venom in the fruits of it, when *David* was made at by *Absolom, Ahithophel*, and their fellowes, 2 *Sam.* 16. If there be a likelihood of this or that Error to have favour and profit annexed to it, though it be a very gross or palpable one, yea, though a heap of them, what villany doth appear on the deck, which before lay close under the hatches of the ship? What coining of Distinctions, which the great Master of the Mint will censure as false and felonious to the Crown of Heaven? The Lord then is

ſuch in ſetting up ſuch Pumps, which being ply'd, throw forth black and ſlimy waters.

4. To exerciſe the graces of perſons; for the graces of Saints may be both proved and improved by a probable face of things. So it was in *Abraham*'s offering up of *Iſaac*, his faith, fear, obedience, were diſplayed, *Gen.* 22. 12. with *Heb.* 11. 17, 18, 19.

5. To puniſh men for their ſins. Probabilities in matters make way for vindictive Certainties. *Pharaoh*, from a Probability, is intangled into the Lord's Net in the Red-ſea, *Exod.* 14. 3. The red waters become bloody ones to the *Moabites*, whoſe wrong concluſion from probable Premiſes, proved a bloody one, 2 *King.* 3. 22, 23, 24.

6. To teach men conſtant dependance on God. Men point, and God diſappoints. They propoſe, but God diſpoſeth. The wind of *Providence* is variable, and therefore men had need eye God in the voyage---It is not ſo ſoon done as ſaid: *We will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain:* See *James* 4. 13, 14, 15.

Laſtly, To leſſon thankfulneſs for a diſplay of Mercy in daſhing-things likely to take place. A Copy of Conveyance is cut in pieces, and a freſh one is drawn by the hand of *Providence* for the good of the party. *Ruth*'s marriage with the Kinſman was daſh't; and well for her, whom *Providence* had intended for a more ingenuous and pious man. What

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is dash't, holds in many cases for the best. God hath regard to his, when he seemeth to have none. He dams up a Well, and opens a better Spring for them. Their business best succeeds, when it is sometimes quite dash't. As there are blessed disappointments; so there is ground to bless God for such disappointments, which come from the Heart as well as the hand of gracious *Providence*.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XLI.

There is an over-ruling Conduct of Providence *in bringing matters to their journey's end; and that notwithſtanding letts in the way, and the length of the way.*

CHAP. I.

AS there is a daſhing-work of *Providence*, as hath before been ſhewed; ſo there is an Accompliſhing-work in regard of what the Lord wills or willingly ſuffers to be in the world. What the Lord will have take place, muſt, notwithſtanding impediments and delays for a time. And this appears to be ſo, if we conſider,

1. The Power of God.
2. The Wiſdom of God.

1. Nothing is too hard for Infinite Power to bring about. The greateſt blocks in the way, like a feather, are blown away with the breath of *Providence*. All letts, like the thin film of Ice, ſhall be diſſolved by the warm Sun-beams of Providential Influences. The *Iſraelites* had lien long in the *Egyptian* Fornace,

nace; it was too hot a work for *Moses* and *Aaron* to pluck them thence by the hand of violence, that was not the Lord's way of delivering them; and yet the Lord saved the people out of the Land of *Egypt*, *Jude* ver. 5. The *Jews* met with opposers in the Temple-work; it is said, how upon an Order from *Artaxerxes*, *Rehum* and *Shimshai*, with their companions, made them to cease by force and power, *Ezra* 4. 23. and yet this work, which lay dormant for some years, was finish't at last; see *Ezra* 4. 24. with *Ezra* 6. 15. *John* 2. 20.

2. God, according to his Infinite Wisdom, hath ways to bring about matters in his own time, notwithstanding hindrances and delays for a time. In 1 *Sam.* 6. 5. the *Philistins* took the Ark of God: they have it, but must not hold it; it must be had home again; and how shall this be? Let the Lord alone; who can find out a way for its conveyance, though it be in the Countrey of the *Philistins* seven months, as it is related, 1 *Sam.* 6. 1. Suppose those Fifty thousand three-score and ten men who were slain upon the return of the Ark, 1 *Sam.* 6. 19. had been slain in battel in order to the rescue of the Ark; yet the same way God took to bring it home, would have availed, though the difficulty of having it home had been greater in the eyes of the men of *Israel*, who in this case had fought to no purpose. And what is said in this case of the Ark, holds in other matters. Our Cock-shell Capacity is not receptive of the Ocean of

Divine

Divine Wisdom. Let this Sun arise, and it scatters the clouds and mists that are in our eye. A thousand ways infinite Wisdom hath to effect matters, though we see never an one.

CHAP. II.

1. SEE the reason why there is dejection and despondency. Men have both their eyes fixed on Hindrances and Delays, and not half an one open to the *Providence* of God. Whilst *David* pores on *Saul*'s Power, Subtilty, and Fury, no wonder if *David* be not *David* in point of the exercise of Faith, Patience, Hope; but say, *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul.* Christians, in cases of this nature, are like the man who looks on the wheel turning, but not on the Flye on the Wheel creeping in a contrary motion to the Wheel. The Flye of *Providence* is on its motion, whilst the Wheel of Second Causes have their contrary motion, as may be shewed in another distinct following Observation. As in a ship sailing directly forward, a man walks from the Fore-castle or Stem of the ship, towards the Stern; yet he that shall conclude the motion of the ship to be the same, will conclude amiss. The ship of *Providence* is setting forward towards its Haven, though Second-Causes are walking in a contrary motion on the Deck. Let *Providence*

then alone to play the Pilot, and do thou in the interim pray for a good voyage.

2. There is good reason to bear up, though the burden be heavy, and have lien long on the shoulder, and none to take it off.

1. Is the Plea, That the burden is heavy? Consider, you may have experience of God's kindness; and the sooner have it, by how much more it becomes heavy. The more weary you are, the more God may strengthen in the way, and bring you to your journey's end with joy. Remember *Paul*'s case, 2 *Cor.* 1. 8, 9, 10.

2. Is the Plea, That the burden hath lien long on the Conscience, Credit, State, Body, &c.? Consider, (1.) This is no new case: *Joseph*, *David*, with others of God's Saints, can tell stories of difficulties, and long-spun forth ones. (2.) The question is, Who is more a Waiter? you, that you may have a Mercy, or God, that you may be fitted for a Mercy? The Lord waits that he may be gracious, *Isa.* 30. 18. (3.) The Hand of the Clock hath its motion in the dark night, though a man see it not. There was a Ram instead of *Isaac* in yonder bush, when *Abraham* might not see it at its first instant, being caught there. 4. Though the burden continue longer, yet wait longer; for so it becometh to do, as others have done, and thou art taught to do, *Isa.* 26. 8. with 3, 4.

3. Is the Plea, That there is none to help; Means, Instruments, fail: Consider,

1. Though

1. Though the Arm of flesh wither, yet the Hand of *Providence* still flourisheth. God is God without Means and Instruments, as well as with them. His Arm can then bring salvation, when there is none to help, *Isa.* 63. 5.

2. Help by Means, Instruments, fails in order to help. The way to have help, is to be mortified to Creature-helps. God will lead men to see that in himself, which after he may communicate by ordinary Means. Eye then God more, and Men less, and thou mayst find, how *Providence* is then on its March, when the Drums sound nothing but a Retreat to Sense and Reason.

OBSERVATION XLII.

Things are set forward in the World by a Collateral Influence or stroak, by the by, of Providence. Or, *God leads men by what they do see, to that which is not seen till afterwards.*

CHAP. I.

THAT the great Pilot of Heaven and Earth can make use of not only a side-wind, as here; but likewise of a contrary-wind, as shall be shewed in the next Observation, and all to bring the Ship to its Port or Haven; is to be insisted on. The leadings of *Providence* by what is seen, to that which is not seen, are wonderful. These leadings may be considered three ways:

Sic disponuntur res humanæ, divino plerunque consilio, ut occasione eorum quæ facienda proponimus, incidamus in ea de quibus antea nihil cogitavimus. *Musculus* com. in Evang. *Joh.* p. 475.

1. In regard of the Object.
2. In regard of the Medium or Inducement.
3. In regard of the Issue.

First, In regard of the Object; and so these side-wind Influences or leadings of *Providence*, respect

respect both Temporals and Spirituals. Men whilst they mind one matter in their Civil concernments, fall in upon another; as he who diggeth his garden-plot findeth a Treasure. *Saul* seeketh his father's Asses, and findeth a Kingdom, 1 *Sam.* 9. *David* is sent by his father to the Camp with provision for his brethren, and there killeth *Goliah*, and so foundation was laid for after-matters, 1 *Sam.* 17. And as in Temporals this may be noted, so in matters of Soul-concernment. Whilst men mind Earth, they meet with Heaven. Some go abroad to seek a service, and are by the *Providence* of God cast there, where they come to bethink themselves of another kind of service, namely, the Service of the great God, whom before they look't not after---It's probable that some of those many Nations, *Acts* 2. 9,10,11. be-took themselves to *Jerusalem* upon a Secular account. However they were, by an occasion offered, drawn to be hearers of the Apostles, *v* 6. Whatever their End were in hearing, God's *Providence* was wonderful in the Apostle's speaking; for there was added to the Church about three thousand souls, *v.* 41. *Peter* and *Andrew* were casting their Net into the Sea, and Christ saith then and there to them, *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*, Mat. 4. 18, 19. *James* and *John* were mending their nets, and Christ in like sort meets with them when his walk was by the sea of *Galilee*, *ver.* 18, 21, 22. The Woman of *Samaria* cometh to *Jacob*'s Well to draw water: She minded water to set over the pot, or wash her dishes,

or the like; little thought she of another kind of water which Christ the Fountain of life did there discourse of, and hand to her, *John* 4.

Secondly, In regard of the Inducement by which men are moved; and this may be considered, (1.) As started in their own breasts. (2.) As suggested by others with whom they have to do; for so we find how *Saul* was influenced on by his Father's servant to go to *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 9. 6. *Naaman* hears of the Prophet, who bid him wash and be clean, from the little Captive-maid in his Family, 2 *King.* 5. 2, 3. *Nathaniel* is induced by *Philip* to come to Christ, who tells him a story of the Fig-tree, which he little thought to have heard of, *John* 1. 45, 46, 47, 48.

Now what may induce or draw on a man to what he doth not so experiment as after, may be further considered;

1. Sometimes a lust by an over-ruling *Providence* shall contribute to what is subsequent, *Onesimus* runs away from his Master, gets to *Rome*, a populous City, where in probability he might lie hid; *Paul* is there, who by *Providence* lights on him, and sends him home a Convert to his Master *Philemon*. *Paul* before his conversion in a mad fit rambles as far as *Damascus*, where was an *Ananias* for him with a Cordial; Christ having met with *Paul* by the way, and let out the mad blood, which filled every vein before.

2. Sometimes men's civil business or affairs, is an inlet to other matters, as was before intimated

timated in the woman of *Samaria*'s coming to the Well---So when the Jaylor was troubled about his Priſoners, then was the Lord's time to let him ſee what a ſlave he was to Satan, *Acts* 16. 27, 28, 29.

3. Sometimes the obſerving of a *Providence* in way of conviction, may lead on to further matters, as in *Nicodemus* his caſe, *John* 3. 2, &c.

4. Sometimes ſome ſtrong impulſe upon the heart ſways. So likely it was in the *Shunamite*-woman; go ſhe muſt to the Prophet, who raiſeth her ſon for her from the dead, 2 *King.* 4. 21, 23. It is ſaid of Mr. *Dod*, how he could not be quiet, but muſt at night away to a man's houſe, where coming, the man was about to deſtroy himſelf, and ſo a ſtop was put to the Tragedy.

Thirdly, In regard of the Iſſue, which reſpects, (1.) What is ſeen. (2.) What is not ſeen till afterwards. Now the iſſue of what is ſeen, may be conſidered, (1.) As ſucceſleſs. *Saul* ſought the Countrey for the Aſſes, but found them not, 1 *Sam.* 9. 4. after he was told of them by *Samuel*, but he goes home without them. They who came to apprehend Chriſt, were led to a conviction, but apprehend him not, *John* 7. 45, 46. (2.) As ſucceſful; and that in regard of what was intended. *Naaman* comes for a cure, and hath it; *his fleſh came again like unto the fleſh of a little child, and he was clean*, 2 Kings 5. 14.

In the next place, The iſſue of what is not ſeen, may be conſidered, (1.) Purely. (2.) Mixtly.

If we consider it purely or singly; and so smart or punishment is the issue of some undertakings, though men imagine no such matter. The *Philistins* are for keeping holy-day to their *Dagon*; *Sampson* is called for to make them sport; and their House of Mirth becomes the House of Mourning, *Judg.* 16. Again, Favour or Mercy may be the issue. So *Naaman*, he went home wiser for Heaven than he came. *Matthew* was sitting at the Receit of Custom, and there Christ calls him, *Luke* 5. 27. Who would have thought, that the Publican going to the Custom-house, or some standing in the Market, should be called to be one of the Cash-keepers of Heaven's Treasure, or a Pay-master of better Riches abroad in the World. The issue in a way of mercy was wonderful. And as the issue is singly considered by way of frown or smile; so sometimes it is Mixt. There is both Vinegar and Honey in it. *Joseph* his brethren were both afflicted and comforted in their *Egypt*-journey for Corn for their Families. *Providence* hands Gold out of the Mine, and withal some scaring-gushes of Water may affright them who labour in the Mine of this or that business of concernment.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

OBSERVE the wonderful display of *Providence* in these leadings. *Luther* fell foul at first on the filthy lucre of those of the Church of *Rome* in the matter of Indulgences; after, like *Ezekiel*, he saw greater abominations, *Ezek.* 8. 6. It is in this case, as with a stone glided along upon the waters; one Circle is introductory to another. Man acts, but the Lord makes Connexions, and they are wonderful in the issue.

Dei enim Providentia causas & effecta convertit, quæ alioqui naturâ sunt disjunctissima: neq; quicquam est, quod oculos Dei quibus omnia subjiciuntur & ordinantur, possit fallere. *Pet. Mart.*

2. Learn, how God is holy and righteous in the ordering of things, notwithstanding the intervention of men's sins before things are brought about. Whilst men mind their own work, they forward Heaven's design. *Joseph* can behold a holy, wise, good God, in his Chain; albeit some of the links thereof were very crooked, and had a great deal of rust adhering to them, *Gen.* 50. 20.

3. See how the Enemies of the Church are outwitted in their designs against the Church: they are led by what they do see, and mis-led to their ruin. They whet the knife which cuts their own throat; they are gathered together against *Zion*, and yet the Lord gathers them as sheaves to be threshed in the floor: they know

know their own projects, but know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: see *Mic.* 4.11,12,13.

4. Take notice what a prop here is for Faith, from the consideration of a side-wind-influence of *Providence.* The Lord can provide for, and protect in such a way as a person doth not imagine. There is a *Joseph* in *Egypt* that furnisheth the brethren with Corn in time of Famine. There are ways God hath, whereby wicked men shall be shields to Saints against the thrusts of their own swords. O how admirable are the leadings of God by what is seen, to what is not seen! How do Saints sometimes stumble, and so see the Jewel which there lies before them!

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XLIII.

Hindrances in matters, through Providence, *when and where the Lord ſo pleaſeth, become Furtherances.*

CHAP. I.

THE verity of this Aſſertion is ſeen, (1.) In Spirituals. (2.) In Temporals. In Spirituals; and that, (1.) In matters of Perſonal Concernment. (2.) In matters of Publick, referring to God's Church.

1. In matters of Perſonal Concernment: Thus a man's own ſins (and yet no thank to ſin) are a foundation for his humility, and ground for an holy watchfulneſs. A Chriſtian riſeth by his fall. *Peter* after his denial of his Maſter, is modeſt in his profeſſion of his love to Chriſt: ſee *John* 21. 15. with *Mat.* 26. 33, 35. And as ſin is an hindrance to ſpiritual good (and yet the Lord orders all for good): ſo Satan means no good to a child of God. The Devil is the great Blood-ſucker, yet is Heaven's Leech. *Providence* knows how to uſe him to the glory of *Providence*. That Foe of the Chriſtian ſhall become in a ſort the Chriſtian's Friend: thus profeſſeth the Apoſtle

Apostle *Paul*, saying, *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me*, &c. 2 Cor. 12. 7.

Sic infatuatus Satan dum obesse molitur, magis etiam prodest; & quod impedire conatur, expeditum potius reddit, quam impeditum. Gloria hæc est Sapientiæ, & Providentiæ Dei. *Musculus* in locum.

2. In matters referring to the Church of God: There are not wanting obstructions to the Church's peace and comfort. What through Oppositions, Errors, Apostacies, God's people are not a little distressed; and yet their case, though sad, is not desperate: for,

1. The Mountains of Opposition become Plains, according to that in *Zech.* 4. 7. The *Persian* Power and Authority there intended, shall no longer mountain it against the Church, but countenance the afflicted. A Prohibition is given from hindring Temple-work, and a positive Act is drawn up for the furthering of it, as is recorded *Ezra* 6. 6, 7, &c. And though some who do furiously oppose, do not depose their fury; yet the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, *Psal.* 76. 10 It is to be observed, that the Church of God hath thriven by Oppositions. So attests *Paul*, Phil. 1. 12. *The things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.* The like *Tertullian: As often*

ofien as we are mowed, we are ſowed. The ſame correſpondency of *Providence* in after-times, with foregoing times, may be noted. It is left on record, how the Popes Bull, and the thundering Edict of the Emperor in *Luther*'s days, did rather encourage to, than diſcourage from, a cloſure with the Goſpel.

Nec quicquam tamen proficit exquiſitior quæque crudelitas veſtra; illecebra magis eſt ſectæ. Plures efficimur, quoties metimur à vobis. *Tertul.* in Apolog.

Quicquid enim Papa, quicqu id Cæſareani molirentur contra Evangelium, id omne Chriſtus in Evangelii commodum convertit. Bulla Papæ, fulmen Cæſaris, non conſternaruut, ſed animarunt homines ad Evangelium amplexandum, *Sculz.* in Annal. part. 1. p. 117.

Prodiit fæviſſima bulla à Pontifice; nihil aliud quam exacerbavit incendium, ſequutum eſt etiam ſævius Cæſaris Edictum, qui totus in hanc rem propenſus eſt: ea res linguas quorundam & calamos coercet, at non mutat animos. *Eraſmus* in Epiſtola. Ibidem p. 75.

2. As for Errors and Hereſies with which the Church of God is often peſtered: Theſe are an occaſion, whereby the Truths of God ſhine the more glorious. It is conceived by ſome, The occaſion of *John* his writing the Goſpel, was the Errors broached by *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, who did play the Devils with the God-head of Chriſt. *Paul*'s Pen walks to *Corinth*, when Diſorders and Error in that point of the Reſurrection, had an unhappy riſe there. He withal informs, ſaying, *There muſt*

Ita nihil obſiſtere divinæ gratiæ poteſt, quo minus id quod voluerit impleatur, dum etiam diſcordiæ ad unitatem trahunt, & plagæ in remedium vertuntur, ut Eccleſia unde metuit periculum, inde ſumat augmentum. *Ambroſ.* lib. 2. de Vocat. Gent.

be

be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you, 1 Cor. 11. 9. Truth and Godliness, like a Torch, burn the brighter being thus beaten. We had not had such deep searches into Truths, had not the Spirit of Error possest the heads of men. Scarce an Error but hath had some Treatise or other written against it.

3. Apostasies from the Church of Christ are matter of lamentation; yet the Lord knows how to render these as useful to others for their encouragement and confirmation in the ways of God. God's Judgments on Apostates are a Beacon set on fire to warn others. What befel *Judas* (*Mat.* 27. 5.), might be of great use to the Disciples, and others at *Jerusalem*, as *Peter* intimates, *Acts* 1. 18, 19. *Arrius* was a Fire-brand; but how extinct, when he voided his bowels, History doth mention. *Spira* (whom I judg not as to his final state; God might carry him to Heaven through the gates of Hell) was on the rack of a tormenting-conscience. I make no question but his Tragedy had a considerable influence to promote the Truth, through God's *Providence*. *Spira*'s declining, set forward *Vergerius* his enclining to the ways of the Gospellers. * As there was a *Providence*

* Ibi cum esset spectator fuit hujus tam miserabilis exempli, quod diximus. Eo permotus, quum iram Dei, qua miser ille perculsus fuit propter abnegatam veritatem coram ipse vidisset, magisq; confirmari cœpit, & tunc plane constituit relicta patria posthabitisq; rebus omnibus in voluntarium exilium abire potius, & eo proficisci, ubi Christum libere profiteri posset. *Sleid.* com. 1. lib. 21.

in

in *Vergerius* his being there, where poor *Spira* was hung up in the chains of a tormenting conſcience; ſo there was no leſs of *Providence* in his improving of that ſad ſpectacle.

2. In Temporals, Hindrances become Furtherances. Inſtances there are in divers caſes: As,

1. In Marriage: ſo a likely progreſs was made in *Ruth*'s diſpoſal to the Kinſman; *Boaz* tells of him, and promiſeth he will ſee what will be done, *Ruth* 3. 13, 18. and accordingly *Boaz* convenes the man (who providentially came by) before the Elders of the City; the buſineſs of the Purchaſe is broke to him, and by and by all is broke to pieces; howbeit this hindrance is a furtherance of marriage with a better man, even *Boaz* himſelf, as we have the ſtory in the fourth Chapter of *Ruth*.

2. In impoveriſhments or loſſes: Men may be the better fitted for proſperity, by ſanctified adverſity. The Lord who makes poor to a wonder, can make rich to a miracle. The Lord bleſſed the latter end of *Job* more than the beginning, *Job* 42. 12.

3. In Sickneſs, which may make way for further Health, as God is pleaſed to order it, and ſanctifie his Diſpenſation. *Hezekiah* dies not, but hath a leaſe of fifteen years added to his life, *Iſa.* 37. 5. An improved ſickneſs may both phyſically and morally conduce to health: A man learns in part to be his own Phyſician, and to glorifie God more with his health, than formerly.

4. In Debaſements and Reproaches: *Joſeph* is

is advanced, and that by them who in their actings intended his utter downfall. The sold Slave becomes a Prince in *Egypt*; and his Mistress her defamation might after make for his reputation. False aspersions do oftentimes redound to the glory of the aspersed, and the infamy of the aspersers. *The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment*, Prov. 12. 19.

5. In Defeats of Arms. It is noted in the Life of *Tamerlan*, That what did fall out as probable letts, did prove a furtherance for a Victory. The loss of a battel is sometimes a preface to a compleat conquest. The *Israelites* are smitten by the men of *Ai*, *Josh.* 7. 5. and their being smitten, is an inducement to the men of *Ai* to be more forward than wise in the management of their next battel, *Josh.* 8. 16,17. It is then an experienced Observation, That some lose by their Victories, and others gain by their Defeats.

6. In Journeys. *Jacob* was to return to his Countrey: there was an *Esau* in the way; he comes forth with Four hundred men; and well for *Jacob* that the wild Ruffians were under the command of *Esau*, who hurts him not. A general Rendezvouz might be preventive of plundering and butchering straglers: see *Gen.* 32. and 33.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. THERE is no reason to be peremptory in concluding a nullity of matters, because of some interponent hindrances. Unbelief and Despondency do too often make a riot in the Soul. God's word is questioned, because there are great blocks in the way of his Promise. Men look more to the blocks, than to God, who can remove them; yea, so play the Sacred Carpenter with them, as to make an hopping-stock of them for an ascent to Favours intended. What though the Hindrances be not only single, but complicated ones? Yet is any thing too hard for the Lord? And should it be too hard for our Faith? Remember we *Abraham*, of whom it is said, That *being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. 4. 19, 20.

2. Beware of an irregular anger and discontent of heart, when some hindrance in matters steps in. If persons had more of patience, they might be sensible, how what falls in, falls out for good. The hindrance may be furtherance,

1. In regard of the thing individually considered; That matter in particular may take place. In God's time, *Joseph* hath such an advancement as the dreams did foretel; and that

notwithstanding all essays to the contrary by the discontented brethren. *Moses* must be the man by whom God delivers *Israel*, though *Pharaoh* sought to slay him, *Exod.* 2. 15.

2. In regard of the thing under that kind considered. The marriage of *Ruth* with the Kinsman is dash't; yet that makes way for a better marriage.

3. In regard of the thing more generally considered; Equivalently, if not superabundantly, an hindrance becomes a furtherance of good another way. The hindrance in Temporals may prove a furtherance in Spirituals; or, the hindrance in lesser matters of temporal concernment, may be a furtherance in what is of greater consequence; namely, as to Life it self. I find an illustration for this in *Moryson*'s Itinerary (Part 1. Book 1. Chap. 5.); and persons may do well to accommodate the story in other cases. The story, as that ingenious Gentleman relates it, is thus, *viz.* That at what time a fair wind arising, all the Ships gladly weighed Anchor; the Anchor of our Ship brake; so as our Consorts (seven other little Ships) went on: but our Master, according to the Naval Discipline, not to put to Sea with one Anchor, returned back to the Harbour of the *Fly*, there to buy a new Anchor; all of us cursing foolishly our Fortune, and the Starrs. On *Tuesday* morning, while we sadly walked on the shore, we might see our Consorts coming back with torn sails, and dead men, and quarters of men, lying on the Hatches; for they had met with two *Dunkirkers*, who

who had taken them, and ſpoiled their Ships, &c. Hereupon he ſaith thus: As we had juſt cauſe to praiſe the Almighty, who had thus delivered us out of the jaws of death; ſo had we much more cauſe to bewail our raſhneſs, yea, and our wickedneſs, that we had ſtriven, yea, and repined againſt his Divine Providence, which with humble and hearty ſorrow I confeſs, to the glory of his Sacred Name.

3. Take a view of the rich diſplay of the Divine Attributes in the exchange of Hindrances into Furtherances. More particularly, Obſerve,

1. The Power of God. A potent Hindrance ſtoops to Him who is Omnipotent. *Pharaoh* was a very great block in the *Iſraelites* way or paſſage out of *Egypt*; yet the Lord with one blow ſtruck at the firſt-born, opens a paſſage for *Iſrael*, *Exod.* 12. 31.

2. The Wiſdom of God, which is ſeen ſometimes in the quality of the Hindrance, which doth well accord with the Waggoners ſpanning the Wheel, whereby the ſteep deſcent is check't from being injurious. Again, The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in the exact timing of an Hindrance. *David* was diſallowed by the Lords of the *Philiſtines*, diſcharged by *Achiſh*, and all this at ſuch a point of time, as that *David* might behold the finger of God: As in bringing him off from going with *Achiſh* to battel; So in returning him to *Ziglag*, where a caſe, a ſad one, called for *David*'s haſte, ſee 1 *Sam.* 29, with 30. Laſtly, The

Wisdom of God is seen in a notable adaptation of what is an Hindrance in it self, with other matters, and so it becomes eventually a very glorious Furtherance. *Daniel*, with his Religion, is made at by the aspiring and envious Courtiers of *Darius*, he is accused, condemned, thrown into the Lions Den; preserved there, delivered thence, honoured by the King, and a Decree made, That men tremble and fear before the God of *Daniel*. There is then a notable Chain of *Providence*; and though the first link be a formal Hindrance in it self considered; yet in conjunction with other links, it becomes a material Furtherance: And this may teach us to admire the Infinite Wisdom of God displayed.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XLIV.

As Hindrances become Furtherances in Matters: ſo Furtherances become Hindrances when and where the Lord ſo pleaſeth.

CHAP. I.

FURTHERANCES are conſidered here in their latitude or extent; as, whether ſuch which are ſo really and properly in themſelves conſidered; or ſuch as intended by the Agents; though the means uſed are not proper for the end, at leaſt, as they fall under a moral conſideration; and yet the end is in ſome ſort at ſome times attained, but it vaniſheth in the iſſue; as, when men by wicked ways attempt the accompliſhment of their deſigns, but the Lord curſeth all at laſt. Now that Furtherances, according to a general latitude, become Hindrances, appears,

1. In Spirituals.
2. In Temporals.

Firſt, In Spirituals; and ſo to inſtance in the Preaching of the Word, and rouſing Diſpenſations of *Providence*, which as they are a

means to soften the hearts of men, do accidently harden them oftentimes. *Pharaoh*'s heart is hardened notwithstanding the Ministry of *Moses* and *Aaron*, together with the Plagues inflicted from the Lord. The Vineyard in *Isaiah*'s time, notwithstanding it was fenced, the stones gathered out, planted with the choicest Vine, brought forth wild grapes, *Isa.* 5. Jesus Christ, the best Preacher, met with the worst of Hearers: they became worse, who had means to be better: though Christ had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, *John* 8.37. Again, The consolations and supports of the Gospel, become matter of terror to some under their distress of Conscience. There is not only a stiff recusancy in point of comfort, as in *Psal.* 72. 2. *My soul refused to be comforted*: but also a door is thrown open for scaring apprehensions. *Peter* cries out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, Luke 5. 8. It is no Paradox, if I say, that the Cordial becomes corroding Vinegar; and that a kind of Hell comes forth of the Gospel-Heaven. It is said of Mr. *Bill*, That he under distress of Conscience, could see Hell in every Promise, because he did see that good he should be deprived of. When one brought the Book to read of the Passion of Christ to *Spira*, for his comfort; *Spira* replies, *What you read, is the consolation of God's chosen ones: they by good right may rejoyce in so good tidings: but to me a wretch, rejected by God, the things read cannot be for comfort, but rather for grief and torment, because I*

have

have rejected Christ the Sacrifice, his sufferings, whilst I denied him; which when he had said, he roared like a Lion, and tossed himself on his bed beseeching they would read no farther. So it is related in the first lesser Narrative inserted amongst *Grynæus* Theological Theorems.

2. In Temporals; and here a Furtherance becomes an Hindrance, as it respects,

1. The being of life.
2. The well-being.

1. As for life it self, the way taken to preserve it, puts a period to it. Physicians sometimes through an oversight, and sometimes through the folly of the Patient, or those about the Patient, see the end of the Disease in the end of the Party. It is observed how some, who denied the Faith to save their lives, have been killed notwithstanding. In the late *Irish* Rebellion, divers of the Parish of *Ganalley* were drawn to a reconciliation with the Church of *Rome*; and after the Priest told them they were in a good Faith, and for fear they should fall from it, and turn *Hereticks*, he and the rest that were with him cut all their throats. *Henry* the fourth of *France* is assassinated, notwithstanding what course he took in tolerating the *Jesuits* for fear, and in deserting the Reformed Religion. Queen *Elizabeth* of *England*, on the contrary, outlives the treachery of Papists. That passage of Christ, *Mat.* 16. 25.

Sir *John Temple* in the History of the *Irish* Rebellion, p. 109.

16. 25. is made good often to the letter of it; and if not, yet it contains encouragement enough to lose life for him, who can pay the debt with interest.

2. As for the well-being of life, as Wealth, Honour, and the like, the means used for these are successless oftentimes. The Father of *Constantine* the Great, disregarded the Weather-cock Courtiers, who did manifest their will to leave their Religion to keep their Places of Honour. The way some take to be rich, is to become poor. A fire consumeth the Tabernacles of Bribery, *Job* 15. 34. Yea, not only the well-being of life intended, is disappointed, but death it self is the issue of means used. The way taken to rise, is to fall; and so to fall, as never rise again till the Resurrection-day. The *Amalekite* who expected reward, lost his life, 2 *Sam.* 1. 15. See further, 2 *Sam.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12.

CHAP. II.

1 BEWARE of irregular or undue Furtherances in matters. Nothing more common in the World, than for men to forget their duty towards God, whilst they mind their own Worldly Interest. So men get to their journeys end, it matters not with them to mount the Horse of the Devil's providing. Lying, Perjury, Cruelty, Theft, Apostacy from Religion, are the Shooing horns for men's

men's designs: and how the Building is like to be finish't, where such stones are in the foundation, and side-walls, will be seen in time. That in *Hab.* 2. 12, 13, 14. may lesson men, how the way taken to set the nest on high, is in the issue to consult shame to the house in bringing it low and poor. *Spira* cryed out, saying, *I began to know the Divine Scriptures; I knew the business of Justification; and yet I set forward to deny all, to the end I might save my life harmless from evils, and leave what little fortunes I had to my children: wherefore God hath chastised me, and doth so heavily afflict and torment me, my life, my soul; so as that no one ever felt greater torments: and the Lord knows what will become of my children: I believe my house will grow worse and worse every day, and will so fall, as that one stone shall not be left on another.* Thus the Author in the second Epistle writeth of him. And it may lesson to beware of sin, which quickly may become a Moth to the Estate, a Consumption to the Body, and gnawing Worm to Conscience.

2. The less ground there is to fear the enemies of Religion, who lay aside all modesty, honesty, and piety, in their attempts against Religion. These Spiders may be wrapt up in their own webs. The way they take to further their Interest, hinders it. The train laid to blow up others, doth at first or second hand mischief themselves. *Sculterus* relates, How the Com-

Nempe Deus omnipotens adversariorum consiliis & operâ, decretum & opus suum mirabiliter peragebat. In Annal. dec. 2. p. 440.

mand

mand of the Bishop's Deputy at *Geneva* for the burning of the Bibles both of the *French* and *German* Translation, the reproaches cast on those of *Bearn*, being Gospellers, and confederate with *Geneva*, by *Furbitius* a Popish Doctor; the Murther committed by *Porterius* the Bishop's Secretary; who being seized on, his Coffers brought to light deeds of darkness for suppressing the liberty of the City; the detection, in a nick of time, of a Plot to deliver up the City; so that many of the Popish party, being conscious of their crimes, left the City: These, with the like passages, had an influence to shake quite off the Popish yoak there. *Thus the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion Selah*, Psal. 9. 16.

3. What need is there for men to acknowledg God in all their ways? For Furtherances pitched on, though free from obliquity, yet prove Hindrances sometimes. Whilst in an honest and prudent sort some labour to manage affairs with others, instead of pleasing, they do displease. *Luther* found his mild writing rather to exasperate, than mitigate the spirits of *Henry* the Eighth of *England*, Cardinal *Cajetan*, *George* Duke of *Saxony*, *Erasmus* of *Roterdam*. There is an over-ruling *Providence* of God in turning the stream into what Channel he pleaseth. It is recorded, how one *Oltacus*, having a Murderous Design, would by all means speak with *Lucullus*, who then was asleep at mid-day. One *Menedemus* tells *Oltacus*, That nothing was more to be regarded than the welfare of *Lucul-*

Sleid. *Com.* lib. 6. p. 24.

Lucullus; and therefore he was not to be awakened. *Otacus* being jealous his treachery might be discovered, fled; and so *Lucullus* his mid-day-nap was preservative of his life: *Ishbosheth's* laying himself down on his bed at noon, was no such preservative, but rather an inductive to his murder, 2 *Sam.* 4. 5, 6, 7. Learn we then to be confident in nothing, and to eye God dependently in every thing; for he is the Soveraign Lord, to whom belongs the issues of Furtherances, according to His Infinite Wisdom.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XLV.

There is a gradual process of Providence *in bringing about of matters: Or,* Providence *works things by degrees.*

CHAP. I.

HOW the Lord brings about matters notwithstanding letts, and turns Hindrances into Furtherances, and Furtherances into Hindrances, hath been shewed. A further Observation as to the manner of God's working, is here to be considered; and that with respect,

1. To Calamities, or wrathful Dispensations.

2. Mercies, or smiling Dispensations. And in each of these a gradual process is observable.

First, To begin then with the first; and that may be illustrated three ways:

1. From Metaphorical and Allusive terms in Scriptures. Metaphors are contract Similitudes; and Scripture-Similitudes, in regard of their proper scope, do point out the truth of the thing, whilst they paint it out. In *Hos.* 5. 12. *Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah rottenness.* Both the Moth

Moth and Worm do by degrees consume the Garment and Tree, whose corroding Tenants they are. In *Rev.* 16. the Angels there have the vials of the wrath of God; these vials are poured forth not all at once, but gradually; and each vial may have its degrees too; for so the form of a vial imports: What is contained in a vial, is not poured forth as water out of a Pail or Bucket, the brim whereof, in regard of its latitude, is commensurate with its bottom.

2. From Exemplifications. Before *Israel* was carri'd away captive by *Salmaneser*, 2 King. 17. they had not only warnings by the Prophets of the Lord, *v.* 13. but also knocks, before the killing-blow by *Salmeneser*. We read of their intestine broils, and foreign ones too, 2 *Kings* 15. That of *Jeremiah* is full; *Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones*, Jer. 50. 17. And not only so of old, but in the Calamity fore-told by Christ, *Luke* 21. there were doleful harbingers and fore-runners of the destruction of the Jewish people. *Josephus*, a Jew, hath written a Commentary on Christ's Prophecy. *Gamaliel* tells of two by-blows, and they bloody ones, which happened to their State, *Acts* 5. 36, 37.

3. From the various wise ends of God; as, (1.) To testifie the patience and long-suffering of God towards men. God doth not by and by fall in; he bears and forbears. There are Rods before Scorpions. *O Israel, thou hast*

sinned

sinned from the days of Gibeah, Hos. 10.9. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim! How shall I deliver thee, O Israel! How shall I make thee as Admah! How shall I set thee as Zeboim*, Hos. 11. 8. The long-suffering of God waited in the days of *Noah*, while the Ark was a preparing, as is said 1 Pet. 3. 20. (2.) To render men without excuse, who notwithstanding preambulatory Dispensations of *Providence*, are still vile and impenitent. *The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts: therefore will the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush in one day*, Isa. 9. 13, 14. See further, *Luke* 13.7. *Rev.* 16.9, 10.

In the next place; There is a gradual process of *Providence* in Mercies: And this appears three ways:

1. From Promises which do imply so much. Thus *Moses* tells the *Israelites*, saying, *The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little*, Deut. 7. 22. And so in Hos. 2. 15. *I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope.*

2. From Instances, and that in Temporals and Spirituals. (1.) In matters referring to this life, there is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, to allude to that in *Mark* 4. 28. Riches are oftentimes given in gradually. It is said of *Jacob*, *The man encreased exceedingly, and had much cattel, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses*, Gen. 30. 43. *Joseph* had two petty exaltations before the great one. God did let him under-

underſtand, that he who could exalt him in *Potiphar*'s Family, and in the Priſon, could, when he pleaſed, give him favour in the ſight of others. It is noted how *David* waxed ſtronger and ſtronger, and the houſe of *Saul* waxed weaker and weaker, 2 *Sam.* 3. 1. *Abraham* had firſt a promiſe of a child; after, *Iſmael* is born; after, an *Iſaac*; after, a poſterity like the Starrs for number. *Hezekiah* was ſick unto death, *Iſa.* 38. 1. a promiſe he hath for health, v. 5. direction for the means, v. 21. and the means prove ſucceſsful. (2.) In Spirituals, *The kingdom of heaven* (ſaith Chriſt) *is like to a grain of muſtard-ſeed which a man took and ſowed in his field, which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds, but when it is grown up, it is the greateſt amongſt herbs, and becometh a tree, ſo that the birds of the air come and lodg in the branches thereof*, Mat. 13. 31, 32. *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed*, Acts 19. 20. I might here more particularly ſhew the gradual proceſs of *Providence* in Spirituals: it ſhall ſuffice to point out the way, rather than travel on it. We may obſerve the extent of this Obſervation:

1. In the converſion of man from the ſtate of nature to a ſtate of grace. There is a gradual procedure in nature, though not in time diſtinguiſhable: for as in the creation, *Let there be light, and there was light*, Gen. 3. ſo in the ſpiritual creation God ſets up light in the underſtanding; ſee *Acts* 2. 37. *Acts* 26. 18. *Eph.* 5. 8. Moreover, before the reception of grace in the heart, there is much of *Providence* in providing the Spiritual Seeds-man, in the diſpoſal

of

of persons here and there in order to their acquaintance with God; in rouzing some by afflictive dispensations, and the like precursory dealings of *Providence*. But,

2. In the mortification of sin. The Apostle sets forth this by Crucifixion, a lingring death, *Rom.* 6. 6. We are willed by the same Apostle to *mortifie the members which are upon earth*, Col. 3. 5.

3. In growth of grace. The very term doth imply the thing. An Acorn is not by and by an Oak. The Mustard-seed becomes a tree in time; and the smoaking Flax, a flame. We read of children, young men, and fathers, 1 *John* 2. 13. The Trees are not all of equal height and bigness in the Lord's *Lebanon*.

4. In Victory over *Satan*. So in that last Scripture mentioned; that is said there of young men, *Ye have overcome the wicked one*; which is not, at least in like degree, applied to children; and they who are the young men in grace, are not so well vers'd in Satan's methods, as the wise and sage fathers in grace are. *We are not ignorant of his devices*, saith *Paul*, 2 Cor. 2. 11. The same Apostle speaks of bruising or treading Satan under the *Romans* feet shortly, *Rom.* 16. 20.

5. And lastly, In a perception, sense, or spiritual feeling of the love of God; and this may be considered with respect to two sorts of persons: (1.) The new Convert, who lately of a slave to Satan, is made a free subject to Christ. The dust of sin raised by late convictions, do cover the copy of grace inscribed on his

his heart, by the hand of his Spirit, ſo that it is not by and by legible. A ſenſe of the party's own vileneſs, makes him, or her, hang the head, till Chriſt revive by ſome paſſage or other, as he did that poor Woman, ſaying to her, *Thy faith hath ſaved thee, go in peace*, Luke 7. 50. with 44. (2.) The old Saint, but now in a deſert. Chriſt for wiſe ends ſtands aloof from the Saint's dores. The Lord is a chaſtizing-Father, or trying-One; and no wonder if the Child be not quiet till the Father ſmile. Thus *David*, who had defiled his Conſcience by ſin, was not by and by ſetled. The holy Dove builds not the Neſt of Comfort amongſt Thorns and Nettles; theſe muſt down, ere Conſolations come from above. *David* cries out of broken bones, *Pſal.* 51. 8. he is an humble ſupplicant for the light of God's countenance, and the joy of ſalvation, *v.* 8, 9, 10, 11. and no wonder, for broken bones are not by and by healed, and the nigh-ſhipwrack't veſſel by and by rigg'd. *Job*'s quiet and comfort was handed in by degrees; God anſwereth him out of a Whirlwind, *chap.* 38. and after vindicates him from the calumnies of his friends, accepts his performances, and turns his captivity, as it is declared in *chap.* 42.

3. From the wiſe Ends of God in the gradual proceſs of Mercies. What theſe are, may be touched.

1. To correct for ſin. The Chariot of *Providence* moves no faſter, becauſe men throw

the logs of sin in the way. There is no reason for men to complain that God is slow in delivering, when they are swift in sinning. *The hand of the Lord is not shortned, that it cannot save, &c. but your sins have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you,* Isa. 59. 1, 2. The *Israelites* Wilderness-sins made the Wilderness-journey forty years, which might have been performed in forty days.

2. To exercise faith, prayer, patience, by this gradual process. *Jacob* is a Wrestler, before he is a Prevailer. *Hannah* prays, believes, and waits, ere she hath a *Samuel*. There is a connexion of Duties with Mercies, though not a connexion of Merit on our part. If *Providence* give in Mercies before seeking of them, there is ground to adore Soveraign Mercy, no reason to neglect Duty for time to come.

3. To fit for Mercies. The Scabbard must be fitted for the Sword; otherwise the Sword, though it have a golden Hilt, will cut the Scabbard, or fall out of it, to the danger of him who girds it on. There is the strong Wine of Mercies, which weak heads are not able to bear. It's hard for a man to go over the high golden Bridg of Mercies, and not be giddy-headed. The *Israelites* were not by and by fitted for *Canaan*, nor *Joseph* for *Egypt*'s Dignity, nor *David* for the Royal Diadem, nor a Novice for the Ministry; *lest being lifted up with pride, he fall*

fall into the condemnation of the devil, as the Apostle saith, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6.

4. To teach the lesson of thankfulness. For, (1.) The gradual process of *Providence* in Mercies, doth lay forth the Mercy by piece-meal before the eye. God could have created the World in one day; but he took six, to the end men might take the fuller view of the glorious work of Creation. The same method in the work of *Providence*, serves to the like end. *Moses*, when the *Israelites* are to take possession of *Canaan*, doth rehearse the several stages of their journey, *Numb.* 33. A Mercy indeed is better viewed in its walk, than in its leap. (2.) God's bestowing things gradually, doth inure to the exercise of the grace of Thankfulness. Every little of mercy doth deservedly call forth the Lord's praises. The slaying of *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*, and *Og* King of *Bashan*, was a preamble for further thankfulness to the *Israelites*, Deut. 3. 1, 2, 3. The very laying of the foundation of the Temple, was ground for the Priests and Levites praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, as is recorded *Ezra* 3. 10, 11. (3.) Hereby Parties are taught how to value the full crop of Mercy. The Husbandman's joy in the Harvest, transcends his joy for pleasant showers before the Harvest. His waiting makes way for his prizing what he waits for. *Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth*, James 5. 7. *Canaan* after a long Wilderness-journey, is the more valued by the *Israelites*:

CHAP. II.

1. FROM the gradual process of *Providence* in Judgments, behold the folly and stupidity of sinners. They are secure, though Judgments have had their real as well as verbal Preface. God hath shewed the Rod, and smitten with it, and yet they promise themselves Golden Mountains, when they are ascending desolate ones, like *Agag*, who said, *Surely the bitterness of death is past*, 1 Sam. 15.33. It was said of *Ephraim*, *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray-hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not*, Hos. 7.9. Oh how sad is the case of stupid sinners, who consider not how lesser Judgments are but par-boilings for greater ones!

2. From the gradual process of *Providence* in Mercies, learn,

1. To observe the first foot-steps of Mercy. Men should be as forward in their observation, as *Providence* is in operation. The way to see the great things of *Providence*, is, not to despise the day of small things, Zech. 4. 10.

2. To watch against Pride and Impatiency, if a Mercy come not by and by. *Behold his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith*, Hab. 2. 4.

2. 4. It's wiſdom for perſons to cruſh that which may cruſh the Mercy. An head ſwollen with pride and vanity, will not be receptive of the Crown of Mercy.

3. To improve the firſt-fruits of Mercy. He that improves the dawnings of Mercy, may behold the glorious day of Mercy. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto Nathaniel, Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? Thou ſhalt ſee greater things,* John 1. 50.

OBSERVATION XLVI.

PROVIDENCE doth make a ſudden change of the face of things: or, *There is a Leap, as well as a ſoft and gentle Walk of* Providence *in matters.*

CHAP. I.

WHAT hath been before ſaid of the gradual proceſs of *Providence*, is not ſo to be underſtood, as contradictory to the Liberty and Royal Prerogative of the Lord in ſudden alterations. Moreover, the gradual workings of *Providence* are conſiſtent with ſudden alterations made by *Providence*. A ſtrong wind unexpected comes; and the Trees full of ripe fruit have their thin and lean face in a moment. Now that there are ſuch ſudden alterations both as to Judgments and Mercies, may be evidenced as followeth.

Cæterum ſi reſpicimus ad Dei conſilium, nunquam moram facit: novit enim omnes temporum articulos & in ipsâ tarditate ſemper accelerat, utcunq; non apprehendat hoc caro. *Calv.* in *Hab.* c. 2. v. 23.

1. There is a ſudden change of the face of things in regard of a black and ruful face of things to take place: and this will appear, (1.) From the full and elegant ſimilitudes by which

which this ſudden change is painted forth in its genuine and proper colours. So in *Iſa.* 30. 13. *Therefore this iniquity ſhall be to you as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in a high wall, whoſe breaking cometh ſuddenly, at an inſtant.* Other full and pregnant alluſions there are, as to the withering of the graſs when the ſpirit of the Lord blow. th on it, *Iſa.* 40. 7. the cutting off like the foam on the waters, *Hoſ.* 7. 7. the travel of a woman with child, whoſe pangs are ſudden as well as ſure, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 3. (2.) From Inſtances and Exemplifications. The old World had a new face, though a ſad and weeping one, and that in the ſpace of forty days, *Gen.* 7. 17. The Sun was riſen upon the Earth, when *Lot* entred *Zoar*; *then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimſtone and fire from the Lord out of heaven*, as it is *Gen.* 19 23. 24. There are ſeven years of Famine after ſeven years of Plenty in *Egypt*, Gen. 41. 29. 30. The houſe of the Lord, and the King's houſe, and all the houſes of *Jeruſalem*, and all the houſes of the great men, are burnt with fire, *Jer.* 52. 13. *In a morning ſhall the king of Iſrael be cut off*, Hoſ. 10. 15. *For in an hour ſo great riches is come to nought*, Rev. 18 17.

2. There is a ſudden change in the face of things in regard of a pleaſant and ſmiling face of things to take place. And this will appear,

1. From Predictions and Intimations on this wiſe in Scripture. So in *Iſa.* 66. 8. *Who hath heard ſuch a thing? Who hath ſeen ſuch things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or ſhall a nation be born at once? For*

as soon as Zion travelled, she brought forth her children. This may refer to the *Jews* release from the captivity; and *Psal.* 126. may be a comment on it. If it shall be extended further, that phrase of the Apostle in *Rom.* 11.15. doth give us to understand what a sudden and glorious change the Lord can make in the World by way of addition to his Church. And as God can and will encrease the number of his people; so likewise decrease the number of their adversaries: so in *Rev.* 18 8. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burnt with fire.* Again,

2. From Instances or Exemplifications. *Joseph* becomes an embellish'd Jewel, who a little before lay neglected in the Prison-rubbish, *Gen.*41.14. *Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon.* The *Israelites* are no longer Scavengers and Drudges in *Egypt*, when the Lord's time is come for their delivery; a sudden change there is for their delivery, after some delays; the *Egyptians* were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the Land in haste; for they said *We be all dead men*, Exod. 12.33. The Month (in *Esther*'s time) was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day, *Esth* 9.22. The truly good people of God at *Damascus* have no little joy, when their intended Persecutor becomes on a sudden a good and Orthodox Preacher, *Acts* 9.20. A sudden change there was in *Peter*'s case, *they saw him, and were astonish'd*, Acts 12.16.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

WHAT little reason have sinners to be bold and confident in their ways? How soon may all their Pomp, Policy, Strength, like a stately Ship, be blown up, when *Providence* shall send its fire-ball into the Gun-room? Remarkable are passages in Scripture to this purpose. Hos. 5. 7. *Now shall a month devour them with their portions.* Psal. 64. 7. *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded.* Psal. 73. 18, 19. *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction: how are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*

Nam malis (qui adhuc adversus justos in aliis terrarum partibus sæviunt) quanto serius, tanto vehementius idem omnipotens mercedem sceleris exsolvit: quia ut est erga pios indulgentissimus pater sic adversus impios rectissimus judex. *Lact.* lib. 1. Inst. c. 1.

2. As sinners have no reason to be bold and wanton, having *Providence* for such an Enemy: So Saints have no reason to be hopeless and heartless, having *Providence* for such a Friend. What though there be loss of Children, plunderings by *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, a body smitten with sore boils, a state of elongation, or alienation from friends in regard of love and friendship; yea, the terrors of God too within in the conscience, as 'twas *Job* his case? yet it is but the turn of the hand of *Providence*, and all is made up. *The Lord turned*

turned the captivity of Job, ch. 42. v. 10. And not only in personal cases is the Aphorism or Observation here useful; but in the publick case of the Church of Christ. So in *Psal.* 46. 5. *God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.* And so in Rev. 11. the Witnesses are slain, yet to the affrighting of the slayers, they revive again, *the spirit of life from God entred into them*, ver. 11. Let not Christians then be despondent under their black Clouds; the glorious Sun of *Providence* may quickly throw off its sable mantle, and dart forth its Meridian beams, to the admiration of those who have been without Sun-shine for many days.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XLVII.

The Use of means in matters, is man's work: the Issue or success of means, is God's work.

CHAP. I.

WHAT hath been before said as touching the Lord's bringing about of matters, his way or manner in working, both gradually, and on a sudden, is not to be understood, as if therefore the use of means were in vain on man's part; the present Observation is a check to such a wrong Inference: And whereas here it is said, *The use of means is man's work:* this is not so to be conceived, as to deny a work of *Providence* in the very use of the means; for there is a work of *Providence* in directing to the means, and abilitating to use them. The meaning then is nothing else, but to point out man's duty, and so to leave the result of matters to *Providence.* And that the use of means is thus incumbent on man, appeareth:

1. Man will otherwise be found a violater of the Lord's Command. *Make thee an ark of Gopher-wood,* said God to *Noah, Gen.* 6. 14. *Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he,* v. 22. *Noah* had been a transgressor, had

had he neglected Ark-work, and expected preservation without the use of means to be made conscience of by him. The use of means is commanded both for the outward and inward man, in respect of temporals as well as spirituals; so teacheth the Apostle, 1 *Thes.* 4. 11, *and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.* And in Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

2. It's an ill requital of the Lord's kindness, that when he honours man to be instrumental in matters, this condescention of God is abused, slighted, and not esteemed as it ought to be. The great God needeth not the choisest Tool for any work. It is of his goodness, that as he works in his *Providence* for man; so by man, as an under-agent or instrument; *for we are labourers together with God*, saith *Paul*, 1 Cor. 3. 9. Instruments and Means are so far honoured, as God is pleased in and by them to make a conveyance of good to persons.

3. A man hath the more of quietness of heart in using the means, albeit God work some other way for help. *Hezekiah* had the greater ground for calmness of spirit, having done his endeavour to check the *Assyrian* insolency: he took counsel with his Princes and mighty men, to stop the waters of the Fountains which were without the City; and they did help him, 2 *Chron* 32. 3. The *Assyrians* are not forced (it seems) to leave their siege by reason of this stratagem of Warr; God helps another way; *the Lord sent an angel, which cut off*

off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders, and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria: so he returned with shame of face into his own land; and when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels, slew him there with the sword, v. 21.

4. It's a tempting of God to throw by the use of what means are to be used. God promiseth the *Israelites* the Land of *Canaan*, and they do not fling away their Swords; for then they might be said to fight against God, in not fighting the Enemy. And when they had *Canaan* for their possession, they were to look after Corn, and not expect Manna, for Manna ceased, and the old Corn of the Land supplies them the first year, *Josh.* 5. 12. When the Devil said to Christ, *Cast thy self down*, Mat. 4. 6. *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, v. 7. It is Hell's Divinity, not what is taught in Christ's School, To run to Miracles when Means are to be used.

In the next place, The *issue of means is God's work*. Four things are considerable:

1. It belongs to God as his Prerogative-Royal, to issue matters as he sees fit. *Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death*, Psal. 68. 20. *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. *The horse is prepared against the day of battel: but safety is of the Lord*, Prov. 21. 31.

2. Probable means take not, and improbable ones attain the End intended, as the Lord is pleased.

pleased. Asa his Colledg of Physicians cure him not, 2 *Chron.* 16. 12. Some have by inconsiderable means been recovered of sickness, when others, notwithstanding vast expences, have slipt into their graves. It is observable, how an handful of men do sometimes beat a vast Army: the Army of the *Syrians* came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great Host into their hand, 1 *Chron.* 24. 24.

3. Means used for matters lye dormant, and take not, till God be pleased effectually to undertake in his *Providence*. *Joseph* was not so fool-hardy as not to use means for his liberty: *But think on me* (said he to *Pharaoh's* Butler) *when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house*, Gen. 40. 14. *Joseph* here doth his duty, nay did not the chief Butler remember *Joseph*, but forgat him, v. 23. And though the Butler forgat *Joseph*, yet God remembers *Joseph*, sends a dream into the King's head, a great noise there is at Court hereupon, and this noise awakens the Butler from his sleepy forgetfulness: *I remember* (saith he) *my faults this day*, Gen. 41. 9. and to the old key which lay a rusting, is now found up, and opens the Prison-doors for *Joseph*.

4. Means used have sometime a quite contrary issue to what they are intended, or might in probability usher in. Christ's innocency, his reply to the charge about King-ship, *John* 18. 36. the dissuasive by *Pilate's* Wife, *Mat.* 27. 19. the testi-

testimony of *Pilate's* conscience, *Mat.* 27. 24. all these center not in the absolving of Christ, but he must suffer. That means have a quite contrary issue, hath before been demonstrated in distinct Observations, how Furtherances become Hindrances, and Hindrances Furtherances; and thereof it may suffice here to touch on this as proof of the second branch of the Aphorism here. The accommodation of the Whole, follows.

CHAP. II.

SEE the error of those, who more or less cast off the use of means. There is a temptation this way; and a folly in closure with the temptation. The demonstration of the folly may here be insisted on, and that two ways, besides what hath been said, and may be in next Head.

1. How repugnant is this to the dictates of common Reason. Reason dictates for the use, and the proportionable use of means in matters. The common *Proverbs* do evidence so much; as, *we must not lie in the ditch, and cry God help. There is no sailing over the sea in an Egg-shell. To set the Fox to keep the Geese, is a wild course.* There are the sparklings of Reason in these Adagies; and if there be not light enough from these sparklings, go we to *Solomon's Proverbs*, and we may learn there, how Drunkenness, Gluttony, Drowsiness, are to be abandoned,

and

and the Virtues contrary to these, to be followed, in order to comfortable livelihood in the world, *Prov.* 23.20,21. And in *Prov.* 22. 3. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.* According then to the dictate of a wise *Solomon*, the use of means to prevent evils, is according to the Rules of Prudence.

2. How contradictory is this course oftentimes to the parties own practises. There was one who had taken up a conceit, That if God would save him, he should be saved; and if not, the use of all means were in vain. The party falls sick, sends for a Physician; who knowing the disease of the Patient's Mind, as well as the Disease of the Body, replies, That *if God have a purpose to recover you, you shall be recovered; and if not, all my labour will be lost:* And so, in this Glass, gave the party a view of the ugly error he had taken up in regard of the disuse of means for the Soul. *Virel* rehearseth a story of a certain Noble-man, who was on his march with a well-accoutred Army; and it hapned, that he led his Army by the house of a faithful Pastor, well known before to this Noble-man: This honest man willeth him to look up to, and rely on God, to favour his warlike Expeditions: he, by and by, enters his plea about *Divine Providence*; as if he had said, God had decreed all Events, and therefore the Decree of God could not be altered by his prayers. That good Pastor replies, I would advise you therefore, That you lay aside the Horses and Arms as unprofitable, for as much as the

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issue

ſſue of Warr hangs on the *Providence* of God; ſo that nothing can happen beſides what is decreed by God. The Noble-man anſwereth, That Arms could not without raſhneſs be laid aſide by thoſe who betake themſelves to Warr, inaſmuch as they are the Inſtruments by which God is wont to give victory, to whom he ſees fit to give it---The ſame, ſaith that Paſtor, I can affirm of Prayer, by which God is wont to beſtow on us ſuch things as are neceſſary both for the uſe of this life, and for eternal ſalvation; and therefore it is no leſs raſhneſs to neglect that, under pretence of *Divine Providence*, whenas it is ſo often commended by God with innumerable Promiſes propounded to thoſe who frequently exerciſe themſelves therein: and the Son of God himſelf hath given us an example herein, from whom likewiſe it is commanded, *that we pray without ceaſing.* With this anſwer, that Noble-man was not a little edified.

2. Be encouraged to the uſe of means in matters. *Jacob* had his Preſents for *Eſau*; and there was an honeſt policy in the manner of ordering the Preſents ſent, *Gen.* 32. 13, to *v.* 21. *Jeremiah* was earneſt with the King, ſaying, *Let my ſupplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee, that thou cauſe me not to return to the houſe of Jonathan the Scribe, leſt I dye there*, Jer. 37. 20. Beſides the common practiſe of God's people in the uſe of means, there are two things obſervable; That they have uſed means notwithſtanding the promiſe of God for the effecting of matters; and alſo, notwithſtanding remark-

able *Providences* displayed in their precedent preservation. *Jacob* was under a particular promise as to the Lord's care over him in his return to his Countrey, *Gen.* 32. 9, 12. and yet he useth the means, as before intimated. *Paul* had a promise for the lives of all in the Ship with him, *Acts* 27. 24. and yet they that could swim, cast themselves first into the sea, and gat to land; and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship; and so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land, *v.* 44. yea, a passage there is, *v.* 31. *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.* It seems then there is a [*cannot*] where means are not used, or so used; notwithstanding the Purpose and Promise of God, which are so to be understood, as taking in the means to be used. And as for the other thing intimated, we have instances: *Daniel* had a good Cause, and good God, who did miraculously shut the Lions mouths; yet he is not pult up, to the slighting of the King's courtesie in his being taken up out of the Lions Den, *Dan.* 6. 21, 22, 23. *Peter* had a miraculous delivery out of the Prison, and yet withdraws for a season; *he departed, and went into another place*, Acts 12. 17. To conclude this, let two things be remembred:

1. See the means be regular, or right means. Means are regular, (1.) In regard of natural causality, or tendency to the end. He that will plow his land, must not beat his Plow-share into a Sword; and he that will go to battel, must not beat his Sword into a Pruning-hook. If *Jeremiah* must be had up out of the Dungeon, he

he is not drawn up with a twine-thred, but with cords; and not only cords, but cast-clouts and rags are to be put under his arm-holes, *Jer.* 38. 11, 12, 13. (2.) In regard of a moral or instituted causality. Men must not under difficulties and distresses, with *Saul*, away to an *Endor*-woman, 1 *Sam.* 28.7,8. To fall in with sin, is to fall out with God, his Word, which warrants no such means to be used. Not only piety, but an holy Prudence, must guide in the use of means. The circumstances of a case, may have very much influence on determination what, and how to be done, as in *Ezra* 8. 21, 22.

2. Eye God dependently and submissively in the use of means. *Jacob* did mind prayer to God, as well as the Presents sent. There was a conjunction of Piety and Policy. He was a wrestler with God, *Gen.* 32--- With many, the Means is the speaking-Figure, and God the dumb Cypher in a business; but with *Jacob* it was not so. Let *Jacob*'s God be thy God in the use of the means, if thou wilt have him be thy God in the good success of the means. Eye him therefore in all; and say as *David*, *Let him do to me as seemeth him good*, 2 Sam. 15. 26.

OBSERVATION XLVIII.

A stock or store of Prayers makes way for a rich Income of Providence: Or, *Gracious Prayers usher in Glorious changes of* Providence.

CHAP. I.

PRAYER being an universal means to make use of in matters; a means to be coupled with other means; and a means, when no other means can be used; it may very well here fall under consideration; and that, as it hath reference to *Divine Providence* for help. Now that it hath a befriending-influence for the good of persons not only in Temporals, but in Spirituals, may be evidenced four ways.

First, From the Institution of the Lord. Prayer is an instituted means by God. It is a *Noah*'s Dove, which returns with an Olive-branch in her mouth. If it be asked, When and where Prayer was instituted by the Lord? I may bid the party so demanding, to go to Paradise: for though *Adam* in the state of innocency had no sin to confess; yet he had a God to acknowledg. A Directory for Devotion was engraven on his heart. There was an Arbour

Arbour for *Adam*'s Closet, as well as a Walk for his meditation in the Garden of *Eden*. He might not only be a thanksgiver for favours, but also a petitioner for the continuance of them. It may suffice then, That the Directory for Devotion was first publish't in Paradise, though it hath had various editions since, with such additions as the Lord hath made in his holy word: And seeing then the Lord hath instituted this means for gracious ends, it's wisdom to make use of this Bottom or Vessel for the transporting Commodities, this Receit for a Cure, this Shooing-horn to draw on the Velvet-shoo of Mercy. See 2 *Chron.* 7. 14. *Psal.* 50 15. *Jer.* 29. 12. *Phil.* 4. 6.

Secondly, From the nature, or at least property of Prayer. Prayer honours *Providence* in an address made to a Throne of Grace. When Mercies are begged *Providence* is acknowledged. 'Twas good Divinity, though from a bad hand, 2 King. 6. 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* said well that King, the son of a Murderer, as the Prophet calls him, *v.* 32. And as Prayer doth honour God in acknowledging his *Providence*; so *Providence* hath honoured Prayer, yea the shadow of it, witness *Ahab*'s devotion, 1 *King.* 21. 29. God's bounty, not *Ahab*'s desert, was the source or rise of *Ahab*'s mercy. If God do then cast crumbs to Dogs who thus lye prostrate before him; what encouragement have the children of the Kingdom to go to their Father? *Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

for what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him, Mat. 7. 7, &c.

Thirdly, From the Experience of God's people. Prayer may well be termed the Royal Exchange, in a spiritual sense: Here is a bartering for choise Commodities, as Gold tried in the fire, white Rayment, Eye-salve, *Rev.* 3. 18. *Esther*, with the Jews, did labour hard at this Sacred Pump of Prayer; and their labour was not in vain: for their hands lifted up to Heaven, did knock down *Haman* with his Complices, *Esth.* 4. 16. with chap. 9. *v.* 25. *Peter* was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him, *Acts* 12. 5. Though *Peter* be in prison, yet the Spirit of Prayer was at liberty, and sets *Peter* at liberty: for the prison, which like a *Jonas* his Whale had swallowed him, gives up the prisoner at the prayers of the Church. To this testimony of the Saints Experiences, add the testimony of God himself, *Isa.* 45. 19. *I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.*

4. From the signal appearance of *Providence* at or nigh the very time that prayer is made. There seems to be something in God's owning persons whilst they are at their work. *Abraham's* servant observes this; saying, *Before I had done speaking in my heart, behold Rebecah came forth with her pitcher*, &c. Gen 24. 45. In *Abijah's* time

time *they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with trumpets; then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam, and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah*, 2 Chron. 13. 14, 15. *And whiles* (saith Daniel) *I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God: yea, whiles I was a speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to flye swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening-oblation, &c.* Dan. 9 20, 21. So in *Acts* 4.31. *When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* And so, lastly, to mention no more instances, That of *Peter* is pertinent; he was a prisoner, the people of God then knock at Heaven's door; and behold *Peter* knocks at the door of the house where many were gathered together praying, *Acts* 12. 12.

CHAP. II.

1. LEARN who are the men and women of gracious *Providence*; they are such who make conscience of serious prayer to God. They who go down into this Deep, see the wondrous works of God. *Noah*, *Daniel*, *Job*, are the men who can do much with *Providence*, if any thing be to be done, as is intimated *Ezek.* 14. 14. And, the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, *James* 5. 16.

2. How sad is the state of those, who instead of laying up a stock of Prayers, lay up a treasure of Guilts! They curse, blaspheme, revile, lye, oppress, persecute those who wish well to them, and pray for them. These continuing the old trade of sin, cannot expect that *Providence* should look from *Mount Gerrizzim* to bless them; but from *Mount Ebal*, to curse them. An heavy hand of *Providence* will meet with such who make light of Prayer; and trample, like Swine, this Pearl, with other Pearls, under their feet. See *Job* 21.14,15. with 17,18,19,20,30. *Rom.* 2.4,5,6, 7,8,9. 1 *Cor.* 6.9,10.

3. Observe one ground amongst others, why pious ones are so taken up in prayer to God. They well know their own Trade. A Merchant, who often sends his Ship to one and

and the ſame Port, hath reaſon for it. A Child is ever and anon in a room, and there is an Honey-comb. God's Children find it good for them to draw near to God, *Pſal.*73.28.

4. Know who are the beſt provident Parents for Children; they are ſuch, who by their prayers to God, engage *Providence* to be a Portion and Joynture for their Children. A little, with a bleſſing, left to ſome, will out-laſt Farms, Mannors, yea Kingdoms, left to others with a curſe. Pious Parents, in being praying Parents, are provident Parents; they pray not in vain: God may hear prayer for poſterity one way or other; See *Gen.* 17. 20.

5. Wicked men then are fools in their Rages and ſubtil Contrivances againſt pious praying-ones. How quickly may God hear the groans of his people, and ſo ſweep away the Bodies of wicked men to their Graves, and their Souls to Hell? There was a prayer made for *Peter*, and the deſign againſt him was broken; and a prodigious death is the lot of an *Herod* who had deſigned the death of *Peter*, Acts 12. 23.

6. There is no reaſon to lay aſide Prayer, no, not whilſt in the world. We ſhall ſtill ſtand in need of the *Providence* of God. Daily-*Providence* calls for daily-Prayer. It's pride to an height of it, to think that Prayer is below a grown Chriſtian. When perſons ſtand not in need of *Providence* to help, and continue its help, they may not ſo ſtand in need

of

of prayer. But alas! where are the men, or rather monsters, who owe no debt to *Providence?* The holy Scriptures do sufficiently confute this fancy: see *Job* 1. 5. *Mat.* 6. 11. *Luke* 11. 1. *Col.* 4. 2.

7. See, whence it is that the Devil makes opposition against prayer. He is a cunning Pirate, and knows, that serious prayer is the Christian's Plate-Fleet. He is sensible of the knocks and bruises which prayer gives his Serpent's head. He hath been an observer of what great things God hath done on the prayers of his people. No wonder then, if he throw dirt and stones into this Well; jogs the Christian when he is ready to fire at the mark; and shakes his hand, when he is about to write down his humble petition to God, see *Zech.* 3. 1. *Acts* 16. 16, 17, 18.

8. Look not on those as enemies, who call on you to call on God with your Families. Shall a Physician be thanked for the Body? a Lawyer for the Estate? And is the Body, Estate, Soul, and all, of no regard, as the concerns of all lye at stake in another way, and that the best way too? Surely they are Friends who antidote you against the curse of God: see *Jer.* 10. 25. *Prov.* 3. 33.

Lastly, Observe the incomes of *Providence* by way of return unto prayer. If it be said here,

I have prayed, and prayed, and yet no such returns are made as the Meditation or Observation on Providence imports.

I might

I might at large reply, but that would be a digreſſion. In a few things, therefore, to ſtop the mouth from ſlandering the Obſervation, take notice of what follows.

1. Is the particular thing thou prayeſt for, warranted for kind? Pride and Paſſion make wild petitions for the kind of them: ſee *Luke* 9. 54. *Mat.* 20. 21, 22.

2. What is thy end in praying for things though warranted? ſee *James* 4.3.

3. Do you pray in Chriſt's Name, and after a ſerious ſort? See *John* 14. 13. *Luke* 18. 13. *James* 5.16.

4. Is not Prayer contradicted by an unworthy walking? Some are like black clouds, ſtill black, and that notwithſtanding thunder and lightning breaks from them: ſee *Iſa.* 1.15. *Iſa.* 58. 4.

5. Do you not lye under ſome miſtake about God's *Providence* in anſwer to prayer? For hearing of prayer is not to be defined by God's doing all we wiſh for; but what God ſees beſt for us. God anſwers, when the thing may not be given in for kind. *Paul* was heard, when not heard, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8, 9. The denial of one thing is the way that *Providence* may take for granting another. A man prays for Health, and Mortification to the World: God, by the want of Health, mortifies to the World.

6. The queſtion is, Whether *Providence* may not yet make a ſure and full return of the

the goods you have left in the hand of *Providence*. Wait then still on God; let the Lord alone to answer when and how he pleaseth. God hath answered some, when it's probable they gave off thinking, that an answer in such sort would have been given in: see *Luke* 1.13. with 18.

OBSER-

OBSERVATION XLIX.

When God takes down the Scaffold of this World, the Sacred Play of Providence *will be at an end.*

CHAP. I.

THAT an Income of *Providence* attends Prayer, hath been ſhewed; the full crop or harveſt, by way of return to prayer, will be in another world, as the Apoſtle intimates, 2 *Tim.* 1. 18. with *Mat.* 25. 34, 35. Here in this World there is a gracious diſplay of *Providence*; and when this World hath its period, *Providence* as ſuch, conſider it *viis & modis*, will have its period likewiſe: and this appears,

1. From the oppoſition of the day of God's judging the World, to the day, the long day of *Providence* which men had in the World. There is a day for labouring in the Vineyard; after comes the Even when the labourers are called, *Mat.* 20. 8. *The ſon of man* (ſaith Chriſt) *ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth; then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the*

the ſun in the kingdom of their father, Mat. 13. 41, 42, 43. And would we know when this ſhall be? The 40*th verſe* reſolves it; In the end of this world. Hence *Paul* inforceth the duty of not abuſing the day of *Providence*, but right improving of it from this conſideration, becauſe God *hath appointed a day in the which he will judg the world in righteouſneſs*, Acts 17. 31. with 30.

2. From the Lord (the Fountain of Providential Diſpenſations) who hath purpoſed to ſend forth the ſtreams another way. This may be conſidered,

1. In regard of the godly.
2. In regard of the wicked.

1. In regard of the godly: They ſhall immediately, and without interruption, enjoy God in the Heavens; ſo 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. In this world the godly ſee the Lord as in a glaſs, and that but darkly, 1 *Cor.* 13, 12. There are two glaſſes in which the godly behold the Lord here: (1.) The glaſs of their Civil Affairs: their food, liberty, relations, and the publick concerns of temporal life. This glaſs will be broken; for as Chriſt ſaith, *In the reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven*, Mat. 22. 30. and as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them*, 1 Cor. 6. 13. There will be no need of food, and conſequently of *Provi-*

dence

dence as a Caterer: The Belly, or Body, remaineth in regard of ſubſtance, though functions and offices of it, as in this life, are ſerved with an Eternal Writ of Eaſe. But, (2.) There is another glaſs, and that is of Divine Ordinances, or Sacred Inſtitutions: theſe are as the Galleries to the Preſence-Chamber. A change there will be as to theſe: then cometh the end, *when he* (Chriſt, as now he lets out himſelf, though he abide for ever as Lord and Head) *ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the father*, 1 Cor. 15. 24.

2. In regard of the wicked; they are no longer now the Truſtees of outward good things, as formerly. They who thruſt from them the *Providence* of God wooing, and woing them to repentance, are now thruſt into the priſon; and no coming from thence till the uttermoſt farthing be paid, *Mat.* 5. 26. *Abraham* ſaid to the impenitent rich man, (whether he were King, Prince, Duke, Earl, Lord, Knight, Eſquire, Gentleman, Merchant, it matters not to determine, for all may be included, none excluded, if rich in the World's Goods, and not in Faith) he ſaid, *Son remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*, Luke 16. 25.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. LEARN who they are who submissively long after the change of changes, or the great or last Change of *Providence*; they are those who have had experience of a blessed change of *Providence* on their hearts here, and who have profited by the various changes of *Providence* in this world. So the Apostle; *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal: but the things which are not seen, are eternal*, 2 Cor. 4. 18. See also 2 *Cor.* 5. 1,2,3,4. *Rev.* 22. 20.

2. It's wisdom then to work before the night cometh when no man can work, as our Saviour Christ phraseth it, *John* 9. 4. Two things are here considerable:

1. Secure we Spiritual Riches whilest the Gospel-Mine is open. Be not foolish Virgins, who have their Bags and Coffers, but no Treasure in them. They had their Lamps of Profession, but no Oyl in their Vessels; they may justly be shut out of Heaven, whose hearts were shut against the real admission of Christ by his grace on earth, *Mat.* 25. 3, 11, 12. Oh! Eternity is no trifle! Men should be in good earnest for it; *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take*

take it by force, Mat. 11. 12. And now is the season, or never, to look after the means of grace, and grace by the means: *Abraham* tells the rich man, who would have a Preacher sent from Hell, *They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them*, Luke 16. 29.

2. Honour God with Temporal Riches, as you have opportunity. Are there no Ministers of the Gospel; poor Scholars, who may be serviceable for the Church of Christ; distressed Widows, Orphans, to taste of your bounty? What a folly is there in the most, who have their hands full of the World, and their hearts empty of love to Christ, his Interest, and consequently their own good! That rich Farmer was a fool to be a drudg for others; and neglect those, who if they had not given him a lift to Heaven, might have pluckt some sticks from his burning in Hell, *Luke* 12. 20. Remember then that of Christ, *Luke* 16. 9. *And I say unto you, Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* And that of the Apostle as an exposition on the former, *Charge them that be rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches,*

Cave, ne intra loculos tuos includas salutem inopum, & tanquam in tumulis sepelias vitam pauperum. Ambros. lib. 2. de officio. c. 16.

Præmittamus, fratres, Thesauros nostros in Cœlum; sint vectores paupeperes, qui possunt sinu suo, quæ nostra sunt, ad superna portare. Petrus Chrysologus Ser. 7.

riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 18, 19.

PART

PART V.

HAVING insisted on the *Observations* referring to *Divine Providence*; it remains now, in the last Part of this Treatise, to fall in with the Directions general for the improvement of Providential Dispensations. The Directions are of two sorts: 1. Cautionary. 2. Positive. The first of these follow in their respective Sections.

SECT. I.

1. MAKE not second-causes sole-causes in matters, by denying the Agency of the First and Supream Cause. They who kick off the First-Cause in point of a controlling and over-ruling influencing on Second-Causes, rob the Lord of his glory. Some there are (as a Reverend man saith) who will rather ascribe *Noah*'s Flood to an extraordinary Aspect or course of watery Planets; or the drowning of *Pharaoh*'s Host, to the inconsiderate venturing upon *Prideaux* Ser. on *Psal.* 9. 19 p. 10.

upon an high-tide, rather than to God's wrath for ſin, who ſendeth ſuch Judgments on ſome, to make all the reſt afraid. Now whatever ſhifts and put-offs men have, to the darkning of the hand of *Providence*, the holy Scriptures learn us otherwiſe. The deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* is attributed to God as the righteous Author thereof; and yet there are not wanting ſome, who impute that viſible deſolation (which cannot be denied) to a meer contingency of Second-Cauſes; and this imputation of theirs is contrary to the Scripture, which doth in an eminent ſort ſet forth the hand of God as falling heavy on the ſaid places, *Gen.* 19. 24, 25. *Deut.* 29. 23. 2 *Pet.* 2. 6. It's worthy of obſervation, that there are reaſons given by Authors, why there are frequent and violent tempeſts in the *Mediterranean* Sea where *Jonah* ſail'd, and yet there is no reaſon to turn *Providence* over-board with *Jonah* in his voyage through theſe mighty waters; for it is ſaid, *the Lord ſent out a great wind into the ſea*, Jonah 1. 4. And not only doth the Lord flie upon the wings of the wind, *Pſal.* 18. 10. but alſo rides in his Chariot of *Providence*, through the Corn-fields, where the Husbandman drives with his Dung-cart; ſo teacheth the Scripture, *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. And to this accords that of the above-named Author; The wonderful events which the ignorant attribute to Fortune, the ſuperſtitious to Saints and Idols, the Politicians to their Plots, ſome to their own Worth, moſt to the means and the extraordinary concurrence of Second-cauſes; the

the Pen-men of the Holy Ghoſt aſcribe ever unto the Lord: they held it the beſt Analytiques, to reſolve all ſuch Effects into their firſt Principle.

SECT. II.

2. ABUSE not *Providence*, by uſing it as a Shooing-horn to draw on ſin, or as a Shoo-buckle to faſten it on. Suppoſe ſome extravagant Ruffians did want a certain ſum of money, and on the road-way did leight on a man who had the exact ſum; which they ſeize on, and after thrive in robbery: *Providence* is in no wiſe a Patron to their ſin, though the tabernacles of theſe robbers proſper, as it's ſaid *Job* 12. 6. *Abimelech* finds a ſilver-ſtirrop, and men to hold it, in order to his mounting up into the Saddle of an uſurped Government, *Judg.* 9. 4. *They gave him threeſcore and ten pieces of ſilver out of the houſe of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain men and light perſons which followed him.* We read, That Antichriſt's *coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and ſigns and lying wonders*, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 9. Without queſtion, there muſt be the Providence of God in ſending ſtrong deluſions, for ſo (*v.* 11.) it's affirmed; and yet Providence is not to be charg'd with the foretold deceits. I have read, how Pope *Adrian* confirmed (by a pretended revelation) the order of St. *Gregory*'s Maſs, whereas unto the

year 780, the Liturgy of St. *Ambrose* was generally used; it was put to the decision of *Providence*, whether that of *Gregory*, or the other of *Ambrose*, should continue? The manner was this: Both were laid on the Altar, and the Church-doors shut; and resolved it was, that they should give themselves to prayer all night, That God would reveal some token which of the two Services he would have used in Churches. In the morning they find *Gregory*'s Mass-book pluck't asunder, and scattered all the Church over; but *Ambrose* his Book laid open in the place where they laid it. This *Adrian* thus expounded the matter; That as the leaves were scattered, so should *Gregory*'s Mass-book be used throughout the World; and that *Ambrose* his Liturgy should be observed only in his own Church at *Mediolanum*. And so upon this jugling-wonder *Providence* is abused to countenance the *Romish* Mass-book. Far be it then from good Christians to put tricks on *Providence*. It's wisdom to distinguish between a *Providence* which may serve by way of probation, and a *Providence* by way of invitation. That *Providence* may be a Touchstone, which ought not to be a Loadstone. *Providence* makes good the thing spoken by a false prophet, and yet this is no ground to forsake the true God; see *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3. Moreover, it's wisdom to remember the Apostle's rule, *We must not do evil that good may come*, Rom. 3. 8. The Lord's bringing good out of evil, is no warrant for a man to defile his conscience with evil. The Lord's not putting a

stop

ſtop to ſin, diſmantles not the tower of watchfulneſs againſt ſin. Conſcience muſt not become the Devil's Muck-heap, though *Providence* knows how to gather Roſes from the Dunghill of men's luſts. The Doctrine of *Providence* hath its good uſes; men ought to beware they put not abuſes for ſuch uſes.

SECT. III.

3. TAKE heed of impoſing on, or tempting of *Providence*. There is a difference between a modeſt propoſal with a ſubmiſſion to God's diſpoſal; and an impoſal or tempting of the Lord. The former hath an Apology for it ſelf, as in *Gideon*'s caſe, *Judg.* 6. 36, *to the end of the chapter*. The later ſprings from another root, as namely, diſtruſt of God, or preſumption on his *Providence*, or ſome other inordinate luſt. The *Iſraelites* lothe Manna, and fleſh (forſooth) they muſt have; *they luſted exceedingly in the wilderneſs, and tempted God in the deſert*, Pſal. 106. 14. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderneſs, and grieve him in the deſert? yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the holy one of Iſrael*, Pſal. 78. 40, 41. It was Satan's deſign to have drawn our Saviour to impoſe on *Providence* by a miraculous converſion of ſtones into bread when he was an hungred; and to tempt *Providence* for preſervation, by throwing

himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, *Mat.* 4. 3, 6, 7. It's not becoming Christians to try needless conclusions with the *Providence* of God. That way of purgation from infamous reports, called by the name of *Ordel*, when the party was blindfolded, and glowing-hot irons were laid in the way where the party suspected was to go bare-footed; and the escape of the hot irons was a testimony of innocency, may justly be reprehended as a tempting of *Providence*. They may do well therefore to consider, how they gratifie the Devil, who neglect the due use of means, or venture beyond warrant from God, and so are more bold than welcome to the house of *Providence*, be the issue whatsoever it may be. An instance we have of the *Israelites*, who presumed to go up to the top of the hill, and there had a bloody repulse, *Numb.* 14. 44, 45. I have read of *Franciscus*, who offered the Sultan of *Babylon*, to try the truth of the Christian Religion in opposition to false Religion, by venturing himself in the fire; and though the Sultan wav'd the experiment, yet that was no ground for the Monk to wave repentance for his rashness. Let care then be had, men tempt not, or impose on *Providence* in regard (1.) of what shall be done. Man is not to prescribe, but subscribe to *Providence*. Man's Wit and Will must

Qualis via hæc, de pinnaculo Templi mittere se deorsum? Non est via hæc, sed ruina: &, si via, tua est, non illius. Frustra in tentationem capitis intorsisti, quod scriptum est ad corporis consolationem. *Bern.* in *Psal.* Qui habitat. Ser. 15.

must ſtoop to the Wiſdom and Pleaſure of God; *For* (as the Lord ſaith) *my counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure*, Iſa. 46.10. (2.) In regard how and when this or that ſhall be done. *Jacob* is a prevailer, yet he is not a curious enquirer, much leſs a peremptory preſcriber how God ſhall deliver him from the fury of his brother *Eſau*: And as *Jacob*, now more aged, and ſo wiſe, did act regularly herein; ſo was he faulty in being too haſty with his Mother for the bleſſing to be given him: for though the Father lay on his death-bed, yet he was not ſpeechleſs; and if ſo, yet God could have open'd the Father's mouth to pronounce the bleſſing, without the Son's opening his mouth to tell a lye.

SECT. IV.

4. WATCH againſt diſcontents at, or reflexive replies on, the *Providence* of God. The former evil of impoſing on *Providence*, doth make way for undue replies againſt *Providence*. *Jonah* would impoſe on *Providence* the deſtruction of *Nineveh*; and having not his humour gratified, how ſaucy and malepert is he! Take heed then of a *Jonah*-like pettiſhneſs and frowardneſs under the *Providences* of God. This reflexive frowardneſs puts forth it ſelf,

1. In the heart, the forge of the natural ſpirits, and morally evil ones too. The Devil put

put it into the heart of *Judas* to betray Christ, and so in effect to bid *Providence* to take back its kindness in vouchsafing such a Master, *Joh.* 13. 2. It was an heart-evil that *David* was guilty of, and it was an interpretative reply against *Providence* in not checking *Saul* from *David's* imaginary falling by the hand of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1.

2. In Speech or Language. *Eliphaz* charges *Job* with this evil, saying, *Why doth thine heart carry thee away? And what do thine eyes wink, that thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?* Job 15. 12, 13. The Lord tells them by the Prophet *Malachy*, that *their words had been stout against him:* and what words they were, reflexive ones on the *Providence* of God, as is expresst, *Mal.* 2. 13, 14, 15.

3. In Gesture, Conversation, or otherwise. *Cain's* discontent at the *Providence* of God in having respect unto *Abel* and his Offering, appears in his outward deportment, *Gen.* 4. 6. *Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?* It may go for no contradiction here, Men speak aloud against *Providence* whilst they are sullenly silent, or testifie their discontent some other way. Some pretend more manners than directly to flye out against God; and yet the stone which they dare not throw against Heaven, they are ready to throw at his servants on Earth. Thus dealt the *Israelites* of old with *Moses*, saying, *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to dye in the wilderness*, Exod. 14. 11. Good *Job*

was

was of another frame and temper; he did not pour forth a flood of curſes on the plunderers, neither did he fall into a ſmoaking-paſſion with the ſervants who eſcaped, blaming them for want of fore-light, in regard of the enemies approach; no, he eyes God in all, and ſo chargeth not God fooliſhly, *Job* 1. 20, 21, 22. Let it be our work then to watch the heart univerſally againſt reflexive replies on the *Providence* of God. We are not to be hot and fiery againſt *Providence*, though there be a *Providence* when *iniquity doth abound, and love of many waxeth cold*, as it is fore-told *Mat.* 24. 12. It was *Jeremiah*'s fault in being tranſported beyond the bounds of Religion, when men were ſo irreligious, *Jer.* 20. 14, *to the end.* To be diſcontented in way of ſin, though for ſin, is to add to the common heap of ſins. *The Lord keep every good Chriſtian from ſo doing!*

SECT. V.

5. RESIST not *Providence.* To reply upon *Providence* from unſound principles, is in a ſort a reſiſting of *Providence.* According to this latitude I take not the word [*reſiſt*] here; but for a daring contradiction to *Providence*, or a bold venturing on in ſin, notwithſtanding the vertual-wooings and warning-knocks of *Providence* to the contrary. *Providence* may be conſidered, as having Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, in the one hand, and a ſmarting Rod

Rod in the other; and all to little purpose, when men are head-strong in their ways. Instances in Scripture there are of such who resist *Providence*; and sad experience gives us to understand of troops of such Toreys, and Oppugners of *Providence*. *Jesurum* had a confluence of good things, and yet *waxed fat and kicked*, Deut. 32. 14, 15. *Saul* was advanced to a Kingship; he who was Farmer-*Kish* his son, is Lord of all the Farms in *Israel*; and he forgets to do homage to the Lord of Lords, who had promoted him, 1 *Sam.* 15. 11.

And as there are Exemplifications of such who resist *Providence* smiling: so there are, likewise, of such, who oppugn *Providence* frowning. *Pharaoh's* heart is hardned, and that notwithstanding the several plagues inflicted. *Ahaz* in the time of his distress did trespass yet more against the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 28. 22. *When the fourth Angel poured forth his vial, men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not, to give him glory*, Rev. 16. 9. These Instances may suffice: Others of both sorts of Resisters, who wage war against Heaven, might be added. Let it be our care to depart from the Tents of these men, as *Moses* spake of *Dathan* and *Abiram*, who were Rebels against *Providence*, *Numb.* 16. 26. And to the end we make no stay, but flye the Tents of such fighters against God, remember we two things:

1. Other sins make men Beasts, this sin makes men Devils. The Drunkard and Glut-

ton

to fill their paunches with the Creatures; but oppugners of *Providence* do more notoriously violate the Law of the Creator. *Ye are* (saith Christ to the stubborn *Jews* for whom God had done much in giving them the Land of *Canaan*, and against whom God had lifted up his hand, for now they had the *Roman* yoak on their necks) *of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*, Joh. 8.44.

2. What do men get by their resisting of *Providence*? *Balaam* was very near destruction in his perverse way, as the Angel declares unto him, *Numb.* 22. 32, 33. And though *Providence* do not by and by appear in its garment dipt in blood; yet it's folly for men to promise themselves victory over *Providence*; for they may sooner sink, with Elder-guns, an Armado of strong-built Ships, and batter down Rocks of Adamant with Snow-balls, than be too hard for *Providence*. *God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardned himself against him, and prospered?* Job 9. 4.

SECT. VI.

6. WATCH against an unmortified itch after excentrical or extraordinary Dispensations of *Providence*. As there is an itch after novelties in regard of Teachers, 2 *Tim.* 4 3 so there is an itch after this and that transcendent appearance of *Providence*. *Providence* is not welcome, if it come not with a gold ring,

ring, in goodly apparel, as *James* speaks in another case, *James* 2.2. *The Jews* (saith *Paul*) *require a sign*, 1 Cor. 1.22. And saith Christ to the *Jews*, *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*, John 4.48. Some there are not unlike the Jews; they regard not Providence in the plain garments they would have it in such a robe, or else it's no guest for them. *Luther* was of another mind: *The Devil* (saith he) *hath often tempted me as he did* Austin (*who deprecated lest an Angel should appear to him*) *that I should request some sign from God: but far be it from me, that I should assent to this temptation. The Martyrs, without the apparition of Angels, being confirmed by the Word of God alone, died for the Name of Christ; and why should not we acquiesce? A clear enough, and glorious apparition, is Baptism, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the power of the Keys, the Ministry of the Word; all which do not only equal, but exceed all apparitions of Angels.* Thus *Luther*. And he likewise observeth, how the Devil hath greatly deluded parties who have been gaping after Visions, and I know not what discoveries. *Gregory the Great* was a man too credulous to fancies and apparitions, as the same Author observeth. I find in a *Spanish* Writer, one *Torreblanca Villalpandus*, a story of one *Magdalene de la Cruz*, who

Gregorius ut videre est in ejus Dialogis, credidit simpliciter omnibus apparitionibus. Sicut inter reliqua de festo S. *Michaelis* multa commenti sunt; In monte *Gargoro*, *Michaelem* templum consecrâsse, & bovem confodisse, qui eo die festo araverat. Ego dixissem: quid tibi cum monte Gargoro, cujus Dominus est Rex Apuliæ! tu non es *Michael*, sed Diabolus.

would

would break Veſſels, and ſet them together again, bring forth Roſes in the Winter, and Snow in the Summer; yea, and that which is more to be admired, whilſt the Body of the Lord (meaning the outward Elements uſed by them, or rather abuſed after the Popiſh manner) was carried about in the ſtreets, ſhe would cleave into two parts the Walls of the Monaſtry, that ſhe might worſhip the Hoſt; and then again would make them unite. And this (ſaith he, further dilating of the disjunction of the Monaſtry) might be done not only by a meer deluſion, or a deceit; but alſo by local motion: for the Devil could open the Walls whilſt the Body of the Lord did paſs by, and for that time ſuſtain the pile, leſt the ſtones ſhould fall out; and after with the ſame celerity and dexterity return them into their place again. Thus *Villalpandus* in his ſecond Book, (that of Operative Magick) *chap.* 10. He was Doctor of Law, and Advocate for the King of *Spain* in one of his Courts; and hath written four Books of the invocation of the Devil; the ſecond of which hath this Narrative.

To conclude then this ſixth Caution; Let men beware of making leight of God's ordinary Diſpenſations of Providence. *Saul*, who neglects a living *Samuel*, is puniſhed with a deadly one. The *Jews*, who would have Providence go out of its road in Chriſt's coming down from the Croſs, are juſtly denied; ſo that their itch after an extraordinary Providence, prov'd a Plague-ſore to themſelves. It was the fault of *Thomas*, who ſaid, *Except I ſhall ſee in his hands*

hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe, Joh. 20. 25. Let that tacit-check of Christ given to him, be thought upon by us, *v.* 29. *Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

SECT. VII.

7 TAKE heed of inferring an interest in the special favour of God, because of some remarkable preservations and deliverances. I deny not, but external preservations to some are argumentative of God's love. *By this I know* (saith *David*) *thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me*, Psal. 41. 11. I dare not assert *David* to be out in the conclusion, when I consider the premises; for, *he was a man after Gods own heart*, and had an interest in the Lord's Promises general, and particular made to himself. The waters therefore passing through such a channel, are of another tang than other waters which flow into the cisterns of men void of grace, and destitute of a right to Divine Promises. Providence is good to those who are bad, and continue so. *Jehoash* in his minority was wonderfully preserved from the butchering-fury of *Athaliah*, 2 *Chron.* 22. 10, 11. and yet he who was so preserved to a wonder, becomes an Apostate from God and Goodness, even to an amazement,

2 *Chron.*

2 *Chron.* 24. 17, 18. I make no queſtion, but better men in point of moral goodneſs than *Shimei* and *Joab*, dyed of the Plague in *David's* time. The 107 *Pſalm* is a Treatiſe of *Divine Providence* by way of preſervation and deliverance from dangers. Judicious *Calvin* there extends the *Providence* of God to men in common, bad as well as good; the bad are not excluded, though the good may be more eminently included. There are four ſorts of deep difficulties, out of which men are, when *Providence* ſo pleaſeth, reſcued by an eminent hand of *Providence*.

1. Perilous journeys, ere men are returned to places of their habitation from which they have been held by reaſon of captivity. This from *v.* 1, to 10.

2. Grievous impriſonments, ſo that little hope of life, as in *Peter's* caſe, *Acts* 12. This from *v.* 10, to 17.

3. Sore afflictive diſeaſes: from *v.* 17, to 23.

4. Dangerous ſtorms and tempeſts at ſea: from *v.* 23, to 33.

Now from this diſtribution or diviſion of dangers, it may be argued, If all ſuch who have had God's Providence propitious towards them in Journeys, Priſons, Sickneſs, Tempeſts at Sea, ſhall hereupon infer a true and undoubted right to the diſtinguiſhing-grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, they will build upon a Sandy-foundation. The beſt way then is, to look to this, That we be truly good, and ſo *all things ſhall work together for good*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 8. 26.

SECT. VIII.

8. GIVE not way to groundless and superstitious conceits about some Dispensations of *Providence*. Some are for observing a *Providence* as such, or according to a gloss or construction of their fancy put on it. They are superstitiously serious about trifles, and trifle about serious matters. Squibs and Crackers of their own make, are more dreaded, than the thundering Artillery of Heaven. Mr. *Perkins* on the Third Commandment, saith thus of Superstition: *It is an opinion conceited of the works of God's Providence, the reason whereof can neither be drawn out of the word of God, nor the whole course of Nature: As for example, That it is unluckie for one in the morning to put on his shoo awry; or, To put the left shoo on the right foot; To sneeze in drawing on his shooes; To have Salt fall towards him; To have a Hare crost him; To bleed some few drops of blood; To burn on the right ear. Again, That it is contrarily good luck, To find old Iron; To have drink spilled on him; For the left ear to burn; To pare our nails on some certain day of the week; To dream of some certain things.* Thus that man of God (who is said to be one of the men who taught English-men how to worship God) adjudged such fancies to be far from true worshipping of God. There is one vulgar Observation which is not by the forenamed Author expressly nominated; but too frequently heeded by such who are better vers'd in the transmitted principles of this kind

kind of traditional Catechiſm, than in the Bible, and that is this, *viz.* A black concluſion inferred, from the Rats or Mice eating clothes, or wearing-apparel; no leſs than the death of the party is now concluded: And becauſe ſuch Principles as above-named are ſo rooted in the hearts of ſome; I ſhall in a little ſpeak to this laſt; for a meer nomination of this erroneous conceit, is not accounted a confutation by ſuch *Ignaro's:* Firſt then, It is not denied, but that the *Providence* of God reacheth to the Rats and the Mice: which creatures he doth uſe ſometimes as very remarkable ſcourges to the ſons of men. There is a received ſtory of a Biſhop in *Germany*, who in a time of Famine ſhut up many poor Miſcreants in a Barn, and ſo cauſed the fire to be kindled about them, and pleaſed himſelf with their doleful cries, ſaying, *Hark how theſe Mice do cry*; how after, this man of blood was purſued by Mice, inſomuch that he built an houſe in the River *Rheine*, to ſecure himſelf; yet there the Vermine followed him with an arreſt from Heaven, ſwimming through the water, and ſo devoured the Devourer. In 2 *Sam.* 6. 4. there is mention made of Golden Mice which the Prieſts and the Diviners ordered to be ſent with the Ark; and the reaſon we have in *v.* 5. where it's ſaid, *Ye ſhall make Images of your Emerods, and Images of your Mice, that marr the land.* By this it appears, that God puniſhed them

Multis hæc quidem fabuloſa habentur: at turris illa, cui a Muribus nomen eſt, in hunc uſq; diem in Rheni flumine conſpicitur, ac de tanta Epiſcopi immanitate teſtimonium dicit. *Magd. cent.* 10. c. 10.

them in their Barns and Fields by Mice, as well as in their Bodies by Diseases. *Providence* by Mice doth tame the pride of the *Philistin* Lords. An Army of Mice doth more than an Army of *Israelites*. (2.) Though *Providence* extends to the Rats and Mice; yet marring and spoiling the Garment by such, is not a prognostick of death. For (1.) it's proper and commmon to these creatures to waste and spoil. Hunger makes them break through such soft walls. *Cato*, when one made a doleful complaint, that a Rat had gnawn his Hose; replied, It was no marvel; but much more, if his Hose had gnawn the Rat. (2.) May not that be sometimes imputed to the Rat and the Mice, which may causally be charg'd on the slovenes, and negligence of parties in point of due care had about their garments? (3.) There may be a Catechizing-*Providence* for some sin in and about the very clothes eaten. As God prepared a Worm, and ate down the Guord with which *Jonah* too much pleased himself, *Jonah* 4. 6, 7. So it may hold here by way of analogy; and this casualty may bring to remembrance Pride, Oppression, or some other sin; or may be inductive of Liberality; the Garment may serve some other: And thus an improving of the *Providence* may do good to the soul, and bring on God's blessing the more; yea, to the lengthning forth of life, if *Providence* see fit; and then its far from being a necessary prognostick of death. (4.) Whatever some urge as to the verifying of the thing from experience, I have known the contrary in one, who is left only

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alive of the whole Family; and yet that party ſo left, had his Garment eaten, to the wondering of ſome, conſidering the circumſtances, when, where, and how. The beſt way then is to ſecure the Wedding-garment, ſpoken of *Mat.* 22. 12. No Rats, no, not the great Rat of Hell, ſhall gnaw this to pieces. He need not dread a Winding ſheet, who is clothed with Chriſt's Righteouſneſs.

SECT. IX.

9. CENSURE not raſhly, or wickedly, the works of *Providence*. It's no leſs dangerous, than fooliſh, to ſhoot arrows againſt the Heavens. God's works call for man's veneration, not blaſphemous aſperſion. It was well ſpoken by *Elihu* on God's behalf: *Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him? Who hath enjoined him his way? Or who can ſay, Thou haſt wrought iniquity? Remember that thou magnifie his work which men behold*, Job 36. 22, 23, 24. Now, more particularly, take heed of cenſuring,

1. The work of God's long-ſuffering towards the Sons of Violence and Fraudulence. There are, *who break in pieces the Lord's people, afflict his heritage, ſlay the widow and the ſtranger, and murder the fatherleſs*, Pſal. 94. 5, 6, 7. and yet no reaſon to attaque *Providence*, as they in *Mal.* 3. 15. *And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedneſs, are ſet up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.*

2. The work of God's distinguishing-Mercy towards some, let not this be branded as Injustice, Partiality, or Respect of persons. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, Psal. 145. 17. That clause, *Friend, I do thee no wrong*, Mat. 20. 13. will be fully unriddled one day.

3. The remarkable irradiations, or beamings forth of *Providence* in matters. *Providence* did notably own *Nehemiah* in that good work he was about; yet *Sanballat*, *Tobiah*, *and Geshem*, (saith he) *laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king*, Neh. 2. 19. How was Christ affronted by the Pharisees? *He casteth out* (say they) *devils through the prince of the devils*, Mat. 9. 34. Thus when the Apostles were full of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, some mocked, saying, *These men are full of new wine*, Acts 2. 13. Men would do well therefore to remember that prohibition, *Exod.* 20. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour:* If not against thy neighbour, then not against the God of thy neighbour.

SECT. X.

LAstly, Beware of extreams about *Providence*. Extreams are of two sorts: (1.) In Opinion. (2.) In Practise. (1.) In Opinion; and so some deny the concourse of the first Cause with second Causes. And others, on the other hand, affirm the first Cause alone to work

at

at the preſence of ſecond Cauſes. Both theſe Extreams are oppugned and expugned by thoſe learned men who write polemically of *Providence*. It's not my purpoſe to be controverſal. Beware then of Extreams in practiſe. Some come not up to duty, referring to this or that Diſpenſation of *Providence*. Others run beyond their duty. Men keep not the King of Heaven's high-way, but go aſide on the right hand or on the left; and ſo *Providence* hath not their company. A *Providence* very eminent there was, in the return of thoſe ſent to ſpy out the Land of *Canaan*: but how are the people affected? One while, *Let us make us a Captain, and let us return into Egypt, ſaid they one to another*, Numb. 14 4. Another while ſay they, *Lo we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promiſed*, v. 40. God in his Providence ſets up *Saul* to be King; ſome deſpiſed him, and brought him no Preſents, 1 *Sam.* 10. 27. Others were too hot and furious, and would have the King's robe dipt in blood; *Bring the men, ſay they, that we may put them to death*, 1 Sam. 11. 12. *Peter* ſaith, *Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet*, Joh. 13. 7, 8. and after, *Lord, not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head*, v. 9. Men have ground therefore to be watchful againſt extreams in matters: for, lame feet in not going after a Providence; and Hind's feet in outrunning a Providence, become not judicious Chriſtians.

Having ſpoken to the Directions cautionary; I come in the next place to give a draught or ſummary of the Directions poſitive: And here, without a large Preamble, take them as following in their ſeveral SECTIONS, *for the clearer underſtanding of them.*

SECT. I.

1. RESOLVE to take a ſerious view of the Lord's Providential Diſpenſations. A well-biaſſed Reſolution is the Spring of Action. To the end therefore thou mayeſt be in good earneſt, conſider of the Incentives or Motives, which are as followeth.

1. To note and obſerve the Works of God's Providence, is a commanded duty. Men are not left to a luke-warm indifferency, whether they will obſerve or no. God hath otherwiſe diſcovered himſelf in his word. *Jer.*7.12. *But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I did ſet my name at the firſt, and ſee what I did to it for the wickedneſs of my people Iſrael.* Here are two things: (1.) What God did do. (2.) What they are to do. The Lord he works, and they are not to be idle, but to take a view of His work, by taking a journey in their Meditations to *Shiloh*. In *Rev.* 6. when the Book there of the Lord's Secrets is to be opened in a way of Providential Diſpenſation, there is a [*Come and ſee*]; a ſight indeed not to be ſlighted; for obſerve, the [*Come and ſee*] is more than trebled, *v.* 1, 3, 4, 7. Repetitions of things

things in Scripture, as they may intimate our dulneſs, ſo the weight or importance of things thus repeated. But,

2. As it is commanded-work to obſerve the Lord's out-goings in his *Providence*, ſo it's commended, and that three ways: (1) By the variety of terms uſed to expreſs this duty. There ſeems to be a depth, when ſo many fathom of Cordage go to the ſounding of this duty. An heap of words there are to ſet forth the excellency and emphatical importance of it. Thus in Iſa. 41. 10. *That they may ſee, and know, and conſider, and underſtand together.* (2.) It is commended to us from the Author, whoſe works we are to take a view of. *Come and ſee the works of God*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 66. 5. What more in the World than the curious artifice of the Divine Attributes, ſhould court the eyes of men to dwell on? And laſtly, It's commended from the Practiſe of God's Saints. It is commendable to do, not as the moſt do, but as the beſt do. *By faith the elders obtained a good report*, Heb. 11. 2. That *faith* there is comprehenſive of *Providence* for its object, as the Exemplifications given in the Chapter do give us to underſtand. It's recorded to the commendation of *Mary*, That ſhe had an obſervant eye on the *Providence* of God, *Luke* 2. 19.

3. In the third place, The ſingular advantages which attend the due obſervation of *Divine Providence*, do invite to this duty. If a man will conſult his own good, here is the way, and this is the dore: For,

1. By a wiſe obſerving God's *Providence*, a man

man is the more furthered in the knowledg of God. *Manasseh* in the School of *Providence* is taught what he learnt not before. *Providence* setters him, and kicks him, as a Ball, as far as *Babylon*; and there he is catechised, so as it is said of him, *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God*, 2 Chron. 33.11,12,13. Holy *Job*, though a knowing-man, hath his knowledg elevated. He learnt that on the Dung-hill, which he did not in his Mannor-house: *I have heard* (saith he to God) *by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee*, Job 42. 5.

2. Hereby a man is the better armed against sin. *Providence*, in a way of mercy, is a good Rhetorician to dissuade from sin *Did not thy father* (it's spoken to *Shallum*) *eat, and drink, and do judgment, and justice, and then it was well with him?* Jer. 22. 15. And *Providence* in way of wrath, may serve as a counter-poyson against sin. He may well be afraid of the black coal of sin, knowing how *Providence* hath made it a burning-coal to the sinner, as to *Sodom* of old: see 2 *Pet.* 2.6. see also *Neh.* 13.25,26. 1 *Cor.* 10. 7,8,9,10. Moreover, the observing of *Providence* doth antidote against sin, as a man deserts not sinfully his appointed station, knowing that there is a *Providence* of God watching over his people. *Should such a man as I flee*, saith *Nehemiah*, ch. 6.v.11? This good man's heart was not in his heels; for his eyes were fix't on God's *Providence*, see *v.* 9, and 14. A like instance we have in *Luke* 13.31,32. But lastly, A man learns not to venture on sin for release from troubles, and for the obtaining of good things, knowing the

the variety of ways that *Providence* hath to help without a man's ſin. Thus *David* will not kill a King for a Kingdom; the knowledg of the variety of ways which *Providence* had to ſend *Saul* out of the world, is a pull-back to *David*. *The Lord* (ſaith he) *ſhall ſmite him, or his day ſhall come to dye, or he ſhall deſcend into battel and periſh*, 1 Sam. 26. 10.

3. A third Advantage by obſerving *Providence*, is, Calmneſs and quietneſs of ſpirit in the midſt of an unquiet world. As he who can ſwim well, is in the midſt of curled waves; he is in them, but they are not in him: ſo he who hath an holy dexterity in ſwimming in the ſea of *Providence*, the better bears out, and bears up; he is in trouble, but trouble is not comparatively in him, as in others. He may ſometimes take in a mouth-full of briniſh-water, but not a belly-full. In *Pſal.* 46. we have a deſcription of the Churches troubles; *the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved*, v. 6. *yet we will not fear*, v. 2. And what is the ground of this fearleſneſs, or compoſedneſs of ſpirit? That we have in *v.* 7, and 8. *The Lord of Hoſts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord*, &c. It's ſaid of *David*, when the people talk't of ſtoning him, he *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*, 1 Sam. 30. 6. The fiery furnace of the zealous King for his Image, ſets not the ſpirits of *Shadrach*, *Meſech*, and *Abednego*, into a combuſtion; they have a cool ſpirit, though warm towards God; and caſt themſelves on the *Providence* of God, being perſwaded that God would one way or other period the

the controversie, *Dan.* 3. 16, 17, 18.

Lastly, Hereby the way of going out of the world, is rendred the more easie and pleasant, by observing the gracious out-goings of *Providence* towards a man in the world. He may cheerfully go through death's dark Entry, who hath had experience before of the Lord's company with him in the vale and shadow of death. Good *Jacob* on his death bed looks back on the series or chain of God's *Providence* towards him, and looks forward by faith to *Providence*, as the Trustee for his posterity. *He blessed Joseph, and said, God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*, &c. *Gen.* 48. 15, 16. *David* being likewise to leave the world, hath an eye on what God had done for him, and on what he would do for his Family; so in 2 *Sam.* 23. there is a recognition, or account taken of what God had done for *David*, *v.* 1. and in *v.* 5. *David* casts an eye on the Lord's Promise, a fruitful Seed plot of gracious Dispensations: *Although* (saith he) *my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, although he make it not to grow.* And thus the way to dye comfortably, as well as to live holily, is to observe God's *Providence* judiciously.

SECT.

SECT. II.

2. SECURE an interest or propriety in the God of *Providence*, as reconciled to the soul in and through Jesus Christ. What the marrow of divine blessing is, *Peter* gives us to understand in that Sermon of his made to the Jews, *Acts* 3. 26. *Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* All outward blessings (as they are commonly termed) are but dry bones, if this marrow of pardoning-grace be wanting. *Luther* calls all the *Turkish* Magnificence, Wealth, Power, but a crumb cast to a dog. Varnish (they say) is no colour, yet it sets off colours, puts a beauty on them: a propriety in God, that varnisheth all the outward blessings of God. This draws a golden thred through all thy Creature-comforts. Thy food, thy health, thy rayment, thy relations, become double blessings this way; yea, thy wants, thy sickness, thy reproaches, have lost their stings; for if God be thine, these are thine for thy good. The Covenant of Grace hath made an happy conversion of troubles into Medicines; and *Providence* hath undertaken the Cure; a Physician able enough to perform what is so undertaken. To sum up all then, Good reason is there to look after this interest in God as reconciled: for, (1.) Christless ones have no solid ground of any comfortable hopes in God, *Ephes.* 2. 12. (2.) They who have God for their God, have a filial right to the

the Promises, which have gracious Providential dispensations in the belly of them: they can go to God the Fountain of *Providence*, and have their bottles filled. *I will* (saith David) *cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me*, &c. Psal. 57. 2, 3. yea, they have a pledg given them, That their very stripes inflicted by *Providence* shall be healing ones: so much doth that intimate in *Psal.* 89. 30, 31, 32.

SECT. III.

3. GET more and more acquaintance with the holy Scriptures, in order to proficiency in the School of *Divine Providence*. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom*, is *Paul's* Doctrine, *Col.* 3. 16. If God's Word be received as our Inmate, we shall not be such strangers to *Providence* as others are; and that, (1.) Because the Scripture hath a finger to unty the hard knots of *Providence*. A parallel or like Exemplification, or something by way of implication, is contained in the Scriptures which gives light to a dark dispensation, and so gives ground to say in this sense, as is said *Eccles.* 1, 10. *Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been of old time*, &c. (2.) The reason why some are so baffled and troubled about some Dispensations, is from not understanding the Word of God aright. He that shall mistake a Promise, will be upon a temptation to

to quarrel at a Providence. The promiſe to *David*'s ſeed, had its primary reference to the *Meſſiah* the Son of *David*; and for lack of ſo conſidering of it, no wonder if trouble riſe high in an *Iſraelite*'s breaſt, when *David*'s Family in regard of external magnificence falls low: ſee *Pſal.* 89. 35. *with the following verſes.* The Prophet there, or Pen-man of that *Pſalm*, makes a ſad complaint, whilſt an eye is had upon deſolations there ſpoken of; not that he doth accuſe the Almighty of inconſtancy, but makes his moan to God by reaſon of a ſeeming claſhing of Providence with the Promiſe. Senſe and Reaſon do ſometimes raiſe a duſt, but Faith allays all; and the Prophet's ſtorm ends in a calm, *v.* 52. *Bleſſed be the Lord for evermore, Amen, and Amen.* (3.) For want of a ſound and ſavoury acquaintance with the Word, a Providence is little improved, yea, miſimproved. That Diſpenſation that ſhould open the eyes, ſhuts them. *Ahab* chargeth the troubles of *Iſrael* on *Elijah*; but by the light from the Word, he might have gone into *Obadiah*'s hiding-hole, and ſeen there the ejected Prophets, and then concluded who did trouble *Iſrael*. The Heathen in the primitive times attributed the calamities which befel the Empire, to the Chriſtians, and to the neglect of the worſhipping their Idols, which the Chriſtian Religion did forbid, and ſo in a manner ſacrific'd their Heatheniſh Sacrifices. In Queen *Mary*'s days, the Hereticks, (as they were

Si Tiberis aſcendit ad mœnia, ſi Nilus non aſcendit in arva, ſi cœlum ſtetit, ſi terra movet, ſi fames ſi lues, ſtatim Chriſtianos ad leones. Tert. in Apolog.

were termed) were cry'd out on, as the cause why the Queen's Affairs did not prosper. I have read somewhere, how the Princes in *Germany* at an Assembly, imputed the cause of their calamities, to the not decking of their Churches, and setting up of Images in them for excitements to devotion. A poor improvement of their calamities! as if the finger of Providence pointed at nothing but at Besoms, Pencils, and carving-tools! I may well therefore commend to men that of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 19. 2. *Also, that the soul be without knowledg, it is not good.* And that of *David*, in Psal. 19. 8. *The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes.* See then thy thoughts be regulated by the holy Scriptures; for as the silvedg to the cloath keeps it from ravelling out; so instruction from the Word will be a sacred silvedg to man's imaginations, as they respect the Providence of God; it will prevent the ravelling forth into vanity, error, emptiness.

SECT. IV.

4. HAVE a ready ear to hear the good warming-stories of Providence from experienced Saints. *Come* (saith the *Psalmist*) *all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul*, Psal. 66. 16. When it was a stumbling-season with some at the Dispensations of Providence, *then they who feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkned*

hearkned and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and who thought upon his name, Mal. 3. 16. Here is a book of remembrance for such, who study the book of *Divine Providence*. 'Twere well if they who profess to fear God, would more think on God, his Word, Providences, that so *their tongues might be as choice silver, and their lips feed many*, as *Solomon* hath it, *Prov.* 10, 20, 21. Away we then to the rich Mine of *Divine Providence*, there is Gold-Ore there; take it thence, and use it to the honour and glory of the Lord of the Mine.

SECT. V.

5. ENQUIRE into the Ends, Uses, or meanings of Providential Dispensations. It is said of *Rebeccah*, when the children struggled together within her, that *she went to enquire of the Lord*, Gen. 25. 22. *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me*, saith that good man under the Hammer of *Providence*, Job 10. 2. *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein*, Psal. 111. 2.

Now if it be asked here, *What may be the ends or uses which Providence intends?*

I may reply, That as there are variety of Dispensations, so of Ends and Uses attending such; yea, there may be various ends in one and the same *Providence* (understand the word [Ends] as vulgarly used, and in a subordinate

sense to God's glory, the great and last End.) This of the various Aspects of *Providence* hath been before treated of. Here it must be remembred, that whatever be said of the Ends or Uses of *Providence*, is not by way of opposition to the Word. *Providence* doth co-witness with the *Word*. To fix a meaning on a *Providence* which the holy Scriptures do article against, is to falsifie, or be-lye a *Providence*. God's Providential Dispensations then may be considered, as they may serve divers ways.

1. By way of Confutation of some erroneous conceit taken up. *Providence* is inductive this way. *Junius* was startled out of his Atheism by a great terror, being in danger of his life; and so in his flight to preserve himself, lighted on an honest plain man, who did further a convincing-work, as he declareth in the story of his life. Some, who would not believe the existency of Witches, have been lash't into another belief, when God in a wise and righteous Dispensation hath let loose such Dogs on them. To hold a wrong conceit, as [that a godly man dyes not of the Plague]; what is it, but to reproach *Providence* as if it abetted a *Tertullus* censure of God's servants, That they who so dyed, were pestilent fellows. It may be observed, how men have been so driven at a pinch by a wise *Providence*, as that their conceits about some matters, have fallen to the ground as rotten-ripe fruit from the Tree. When there were several contending

Hîc (O sapientiam Dei ad mirabilem! optimam scholam Christianitatis Dominus mihi paraverat. Rogat Rusticus, &c. In vita *Junii*, p. 10.

tending for the Popedom-ſhip, what becomes then of an infallible Supremacy? Who ſhall determine the caſe now? What is now a General-Council in point of Juriſdiction? *Gerſon* ſteps forth, and aſſerts the Vicar-ſhip to be removable authoritatively and juridically, as he phraſeth it in his Book written *De auferibilitate Papæ ab Eccleſiâ.*

2. By way of Information and Confirmation. *John* is informed and confirmed, That Jeſus the Son of *Mary* is the Chriſt; and that by a *Providence*, in the Spirit's deſcending and remaining on Chriſt, *John* 1. 33. *John*'s Diſciples are more fully informed and confirmed by what they ſee and hear, *Mat.* 11. 4, 5. That *Providence* referring to *Cornelius*, with thoſe at his houſe; the way of *Peter*'s coming to them; and the gifts of the Holy Spirit poured forth on them; might well leſſon, the *Gentiles* admiſſion to Goſpel-priviledges with the *Jews*, ſee *Acts* 10. 47. *Acts* 11. 18. The doctrine of man's inability to ſelf-converſion, hath its confirmation in the School of *Providence*. Let men ſtate Converſion-work aright, wherein it conſiſteth, obſerve the hardneſs of men's hearts, notwithſtanding ſoftning means, which are ſo when and where the Lord bleſſeth the means; let them hear the ſavoury and experimental Narratives of ſound Converts; and they may well be induced to give more line, than ſome will allow, to that of Chriſt in *Joh.* 6. 44. *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.*

3. By way of Conviction of, or rouſing Excitation

citation from some sin or other in point of Practise. Though it be not the glass, as the Word; yet it may, as an hand, hold up the glass before the face of the guilty. *Joseph* his brethren met with an awakening *Providence* in *Egypt*, Gen. 42. 21. That in *Job* 36. is very pertinent here: *And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity*, v. 8, 9, 10. *Providence* then hath a way for access to the consciences of men; and that not only by general alarums, but by more particular and remarkable insinuations or windings, if I may so phrase it. An instance we have in God's Providential dealing with *Jonah: Thou hast had pity* (saith the Lord to froward *Jonah*) *on the guord, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh*, &c.? *Jon.* 4. 10. 11. God doth usher in a conviction of *Jonah*'s unreasonable passion, even from the guord, in and about which there was a remarkable display of *Providence* both as to its growth and withering. To this of *Jonah*, I shall add a story out of *Luther*'s Postills. We read (saith he) of a certain Father, who by reason of impatience and discontent at the provocations which did occur in the place of his abode, did purpose to get him gone, and alone in peace live to God in a Wilderness. Where when he lived solitary, it hapned once, that his earthen drinking-cup did overturn; which

which he by and by ſet up again: this cup in like ſort falls again, which he ſets up right again: and whenas it fell the third time, he (being all in a feud or paſſion) daſh-th it on the ground, and it broke into ſmall pieces: but by and by be-thinking himſelf, *Alas* (ſaith he) *I cannot have peace with my ſelf, I ſee I have ſinned*; and forthwith betook himſelf to the place of his former abode, notwithſtanding temptations there; and ſo made it his work to watch againſt evil deſires, by exerciſing ſelf-denial, and not by deſerting his place and ſtation.

4. By Exemplary Caution. The wrathful Diſpenſations of *Providence* are Warning-monitions. The Lord is terrible in his doings, to the end he may not be further terrible. We have the doctrine aſſerted once and again; *God is terrible in his works or doings towards the children of men*, Pſal. 66. 3, 5. We have alſo the uſe of this doctrine, *v.* 7. *Let not the rebellious exalt themſelves. Selah.* *Remember Lot's Wife*, ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 17. 32. *God ſpared not* (ſaith Peter) *the old world, but ſaved Noah the eighth perſon, a preacher of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into aſhes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them examples unto thoſe that ſhould after live ungodly*, 2 Pet. 2. 5, 6.

5. By way of Prohibition. There is a moral prohibition from the word, *Gen.* 2. 17. and there is a phyſical or natural one, when there is an impediment more or leſs in the way, as Cherubims, which forbid an acceſs to the Tree of Life, *Gen.* 3. 24. There is a prohibition which is

mixt, partly moral, and partly otherwise. So *Balaam*, his way was perverse, and withal the Angel opposed in the way of his journey, *Num.* 22.32. Now here it must be remembred, That every seeming-prohibition of *Providence*, doth not by and by bespeak the evil of a man's way. *Jacob* met with an *Esau* coming forth armed against him; he was not prohibited from, but warranted a returning into his Countrey, *Gen.* 32.5. However, where a man meets with *Providence* as checking a man's courses, especially if a signal check, or series and chain of checks, there is great reason to consider of a man's ways, to desist from what appears to be sinful, and to give God the glory of such a checking dispensation, which hath its double consideration; (1.) As it looks with a stern and full countenance on the substance, matter, or nature of the thing about which a man is conversant: so in *Jonah*'s case, when he play'd the part of a Runagate from his God; that *Tarshish* voyage the very Heavens frown on, and leave not frowning till the Ship is unloaded of its living burden, *Jon.* 1. 3,4,15. (2.) As it looks on the circumstances attending the action. An instance for this in *David*'s good intention to bring again the Ark; the work was good and laudable, yet a checking-*Providence* there is in the Lord's smiting *Uzzah*; and that checking-*Providence* respects the omission of a weighty circumstance, or an innovation in bringing up the Ark; for so it's said to the chief of the fathers of the *Levites*: *For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon*

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us, for that we sought him not after the due order, 1 Chron. 15. 13. Thus, whether *Providence* be prohibitive absolutely as to the matter, or limitedly as to some circumstance or other; it concerns man, under such frowning-aspects of *Providence*, to take a survey, and accordingly to demean himself.

6. By way of Encouragement. There are encouraging Providences to duty. These may respect, (1.) Doing-work, which may be more common or special. When God calls to more than ordinary work, he vouchsafeth more than ordinary encouragement. So it was with *Moses*, Exod. 4. 2, to 9. *Joshua* had an encouraging Vision by *Jericho*; Josh. 5. 13. So the Apostles *went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*, Mark 16. 20. (2.) Suffering-work. Much of God's Providence there is by way of preparation and corroboration to be observed: so in *Rev.* 2. 10. there is fore-warning given, and consequently a fore-arming.

7. By way of Supportation and Consolation under Difficulties, Distresses, Afflictions. There are supporting-consolations, or consolatory-supportations. This bread is broken to the sons and daughters of sorrows. The Supports and Consolations are of two sorts (if I may so distinguish them), (1.) *Internal* The Lord feasts his children, whilst wicked ones would starve them, ruin them. The Father of Spirits makes out Himself to their spirits. Christ hath his Banqueting-house for those of His who are without a certain habitation, *Cant.* 2. 4. with

2 Cor. 4. 11. When men frown, God smiles. A joy there is, *and no one taketh it from them*, John 16. 22. It is reported of *Philip* the *Landsgrave*, who was confined by the Emperor *Charles* the fifth, That being asked, What supported him, and cheered him in that condition? He answered, saying, *I feel the divine comforts of the Martyrs.* But, (2.) There are Supports and Comforts *External*; as when the Lord in his Providence doth issue matters comfortably for them. So in the case of enemies, when God works, and so works, even to the amazement of wicked ones, so as they may be ready to say to Providence, as the Devils to Christ, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* Mat. 8. 29. and this is that which is implied in *David's* prayer, *Psal.* 86. 17. *Shew a token for good, that they which hate me, may see it, and be ashamed, because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.*

8. By way of Direction. There are the leadings of Providence; but these are subordinate to the Word, not repugnant to it. The Word is the Rule ruling; Providence, as a Directory, is the Rule ruled. As therefore the Rule of the Word is partly through the weakness of some on the one hand, and partly through the perverseness of others on the other hand, too much neglected, and disregarded: so in like sort the light of Providence, partly through the weak apprehension of some, and the perverse perception of others, is little heeded as it ought to be. We do not find that the chief Priests and Scribes did make enquiry after Christ, though they were alarumed by the

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Wise-men's coming to *Jerusalem*, so to have done; they, being consulted by *Herod*, point out the way to *Bethlehem* to the Wise-men; who as they were awakened by the Starr they saw in the East; so they are led by a *Providence* to *Jerusalem*; there they have light from the Sacred Oracle, where Christ was to be born; and after, going to *Bethlehem*, they have a sight of the Starr again which they saw in the East. The leading of them by the Starr, had its amicable aspect to, and with, the Sacred Oracle, resolving where Christ should be born. And though the Lord do not now-a-days provide Starrs to guide men in their ordinary Affairs; yet there are the becks, indigitations, the twinkling-rays of *Providence* in matters to be heeded for direction. I could enlarge here on this Head; but because this Treatise swells, it may suffice to have pointed at the pointings of *Providence*, as holding a correspondence with the Word, which is the Christian-man's Directory for his Affairs and Concernments.

SECT. VI.

6. KEEP up an holy Communion with God in his Dispensations. If *Providence* have a tongue to speak, and that divers ways, as hath been shewed in the fore-going Section; then men should have an ear to hear: So had *Cornelius*, as he declares to *Peter*, Acts 10. 33. It's the highest piece of incivility, to slight the Visits

Visits and Letters of *Providence*. As it is man's wisdom to enquire into the ends of God's Dispensations; so it is his folly to go no farther than enquiry. An holy conformity should be the result or issue of enquiry. To know *this* or *that* to be the End of God in a Dispensation, and yet to stand a-loof from a conformity to, or compliance with such an End, is double iniquity. Let it be thy care then, O man, whoever thou art, seriously to consider what Errand or Message this or that Dispensation hath to thy soul; hear it awfully, and obey it fully; so shall God have the glory of his *Providence*, and thy Soul the comfort of thy so-performed a duty.

SECT. VII.

7. LOOK after encrease of Grace, in order to the better bearing of Providential Dispensations. The Apostle *Paul* calleth on the *Ephesians*, and in them on others, To *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. 6. 10. And good reason is there to mind this: for weak Bottles are not fit for the new and strong Wine of Divine Dispensations. A painted man bears not a real Burden; and a real Man-child can better hold a Rattle in his hand, than carry a Faggot on his back. Eminency, as well as reality of Grace, is the Christian's concernment; and this appears, if an eye be had, (1.) To the eminency or height of a Divine

a Divine Diſpenſation. There is ſometimes an *Iſaac*-trial, and a man had need of an *Abraham*'s faith. A *Goliah*-difficulty calls for the courage and ſpirit of a *David*. Conſumptive lungs have an hard task to follow a *Providence* up the hill. (2.) To the variety of Diſpenſations. Proſperity and Adverſity do often take their turns. It's no eaſie matter to manage wiſely variety of conditions. *Job* ſpeaks of *the ſecret of God on his tabernacle*, Job 29. 4. and again, *He* (God) *hath hedged my way, and ſtilled me*, Job 30. 11. He hath need of a *Job*'s graces, who may take a *Job* by the hand in point of various diſpenſations. (3.) To the ſuddenneſs or unexpectedneſs of a Diſpenſation. Weak bodies are not ſo capacitated to bear ſudden changes in Diet, Air, Apparel, as thoſe that be ſtrong and vigorous. A ſudden Affliction may preſs a man too low; and an unexpected Mercy may lift a man too high. He had need of good eyes, and ſtrong brains, who is taken out of a dark Dungeon, and ſet on the top of a Pyramid or high Tower. *Jonah* had an unexpected guord; and that which *came up in a night, periſhed in a night*, Jonah 4. 10. How is he tranſported beyond ſobriety under the guord-diſpenſation! He who was exceeding glad, was exceeding angry; his exceſſive joy is attended with inordinate ſorrow and diſcontent of heart. Let then the conſideration of the height, variety, ſuddenneſs, of Providential Diſpenſations, be an excitement to look after an encreaſe of grace; the exerciſe of grace encreaſed, and a further encreaſe of grace exerciſed.

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SECT. VIII.

8. KEEP a good Conscience in following the work of the place or station wherein *Providence* hath set thee. It is said of *Jacob*, that he set pilled rods before the flocks, and the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattel ring-straked, speckled, and spotted, *Gen.*30.38,39. The application of this is easie; Set before thine eyes the good examples of such who have minded the work of their places; and imitate them: Above all examples, forget not that of Christ, *John* 17. 4. *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* There is a work, which every one is to make conscience of, and so to glorifie God in minding that work---*Magistrates are to be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord*, 2 Sam.23.3 They who are Gods in regard of their Places, are not to be Devils in regard of their Administrations. *Nehemiah* did not as others before him, because of the fear of the Lord, *Neh.*5.15. Again, Church-men are to mind their work: *Paul* had his *conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity*, 2 Cor.1.12. He was *laborious in the Lord's vineyard*, 1 Cor.15.10. He writ as well as preach't; though a prisoner, yet his pen is at liberty for the service of the Church, *Gal.*6.11. he gives not off driving the Gospel-Nail one way, when there was no driving of it another. Lastly, This concerns Parents, Masters, Children, Servants, to consider, how they move in the Ark or Sphere of their respective stations--- No place so

ſo mean, but a perſon may glorifie God in it. Obedience to God in the place where *Providence* hath fixed a perſon, is better than Sacrifice out of it. *Luther* hath in his *Poſtils* what illuſtrates the matter in hand; with which, I conclude this Section. *A certain Houſholder hath a Wife, Daughter, Son, Maid ſervant, and Man-ſervant: He commands his Man to harneſs the horſes, to bring home wood, to plough, and ſuch like work. He wills his Maid-ſervant to milk the Cows, make Butter, and ſuch like. To his Wife he commits the care of the Family, and the ordering of proviſion. To his daughter, the diſtaff, and the making of beds. All theſe are the injunctions of one and the ſame Maſter. But now if the Maid, leaving her office and task required, ſhall harneſs the horſes, and fetch home wood from the Copſes: and, on the other hand, the ſervant ſhall buſie himſelf about the Cows and Milk-pails, which is not his work: and the Daughter, leaving her Whorle, inſtead of a Spinſter ſhall become a Carter: the Wife, or Mother, ſhall make the beds, and handle the Diſtaff, and forget her Cookery for the Family: and moreover, ſhould they all ſay, The Maſter hath commanded theſe things to be done; this is the will of him who is lord of all, May not this Houſholder now, and that deſervedly too, take a Cudgel, and beat them all? and from thence reply unto them, Though this be my command, yet I gave it not to every one to be ſo done, but aſſigned every one his work, which ſhould have been followed.*

SECT.

SECT. IX.

9. HUSBAND well the signal Opportunities which *Providence* puts into thy hand for being serviceable for the Church of Christ. *Joseph* by the *Providence* of God is advanced in the Corn-Countrey; and he takes care then, in time of Famine, for his Father, and Relations, the Church then in *Jacob* his Family, *Gen.* 45. 9, 10, 11. *Nehemiah* was no selfish Courtier; he is affected with the sad case of his Countrey-men, and prudently petitions the *Persian*-Monarch on the behalf of them, *Neh.* 2. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Mordecai* is plain with his Cousin *Esther*, though now Queen; *Think not* (saith he) *with thy self, that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews: for if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy fathers house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?* Esth. 4. 12, 13. *Onesiphorus* lets not slip the opportunity of owning a *Paul* then, when others were frighted with the noise of the Apostle's Chain. *He oft* (saith *Paul*) *refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me*, 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17. Let it be our care then judiciously to observe, and accordingly to improve the remarkable opportunities for doing good. *Nothing* (saith a worthy man of our *Israel*) *more sads and dulls the heart, when one comes to dye, than his neglect of such*

Mr. *Vines* in Serm. 2 Sam. 3. 20.

such opportunities which God's Providence or his own Place have put into his hand of receiving or doing good: nor is there a sharper corrosive, than the reflection upon those days and times that have passed over him, [malè, aliud, nihil agentem.]

SECT. X.

LASTLY, Live holily and thankfully the Providential Dispensations which have concentred or met in thy Person, Family, or Relations. To this end consider the following Incentives:

1. With what patheticalness, or holy earnestness is the living of *Providences* pressed in Scripture? See *Deut* 8.6. with the precedent verses: *Josh.* 24.14. 1 *Sam.* 12.24. *Ephes.* 2.11, 12, 13.

2. The Law of Ingenuity requireth holiness and thankfulness for what God hath done in his *Providence* for men. *Thou* (saith *David* to God) *hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling: I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*, Psal. 116. 8, 9. See *Luke* 1. 74, 75.

3. Sin otherwise is greatly aggravated. The Lord may say for neglect of a responsable carriage towards his Dispensations, as *David* of *Nabal*, *Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness*, 1 Sam. 25. 21. It is made an aggravation of *Hezekiah*'s sin, that *he rendred not again according to the benefit done unto*

unto him: for his heart was lifted up; 2 Chron. 32. 25.

4. The thankful and holy living of *Providences*, may invite the God of *Providence* to do more for persons. *If that had been too little for thee* (saith God by *Nathan* to *David*) *I would moreover have given unto thee* such and such things, 2 *Sam.* 12. 8. God hath a rich treasure of kindness; he will not be a barren Wilderness to those who are a *Carmel* for holy fruitfulness.

I conclude all with that of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

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